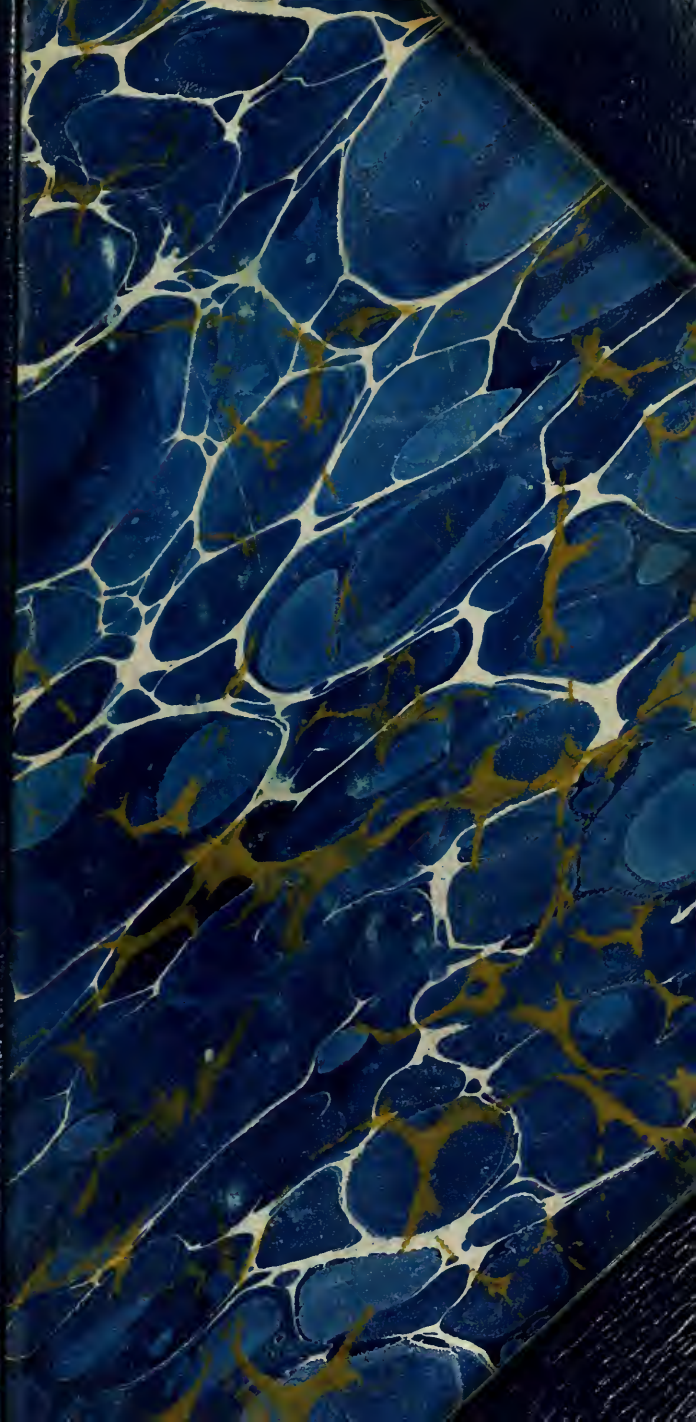
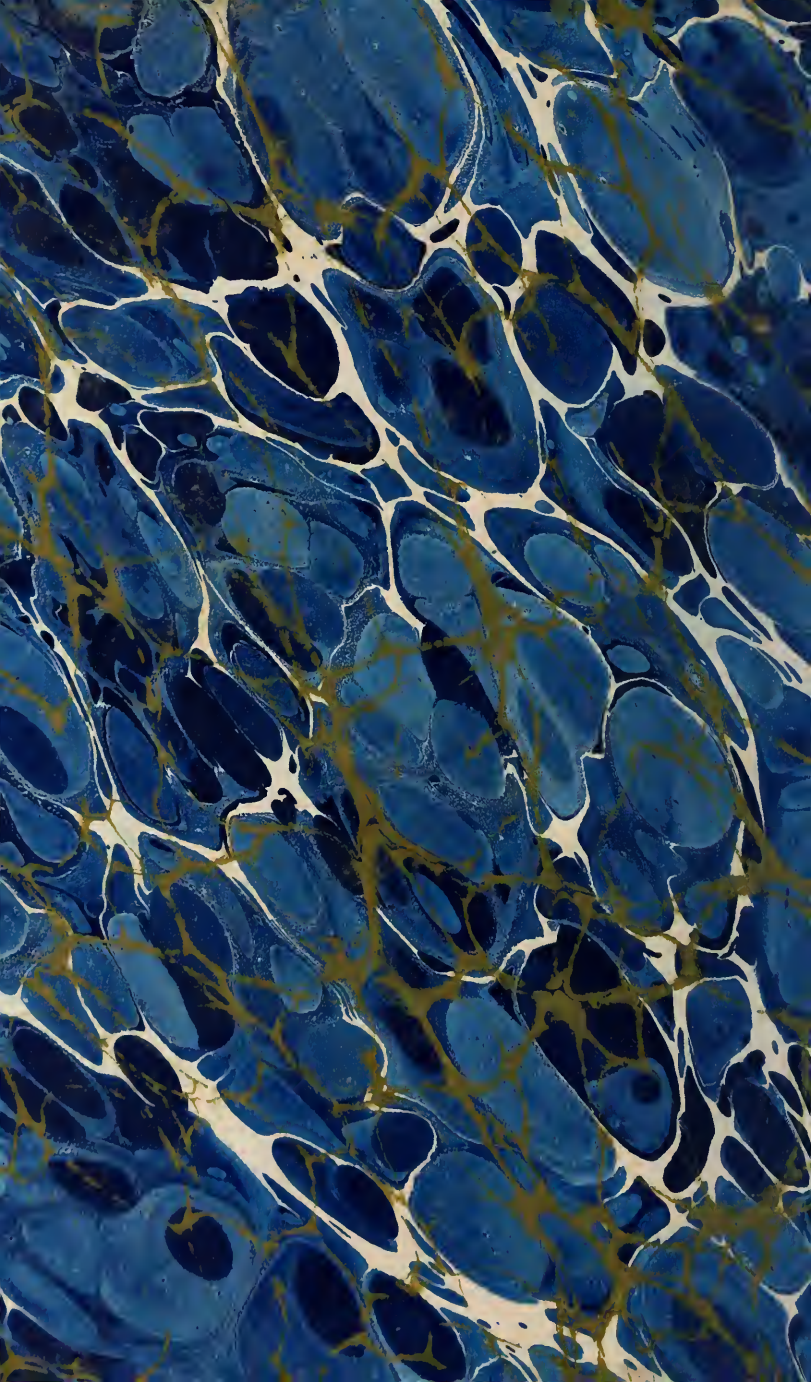


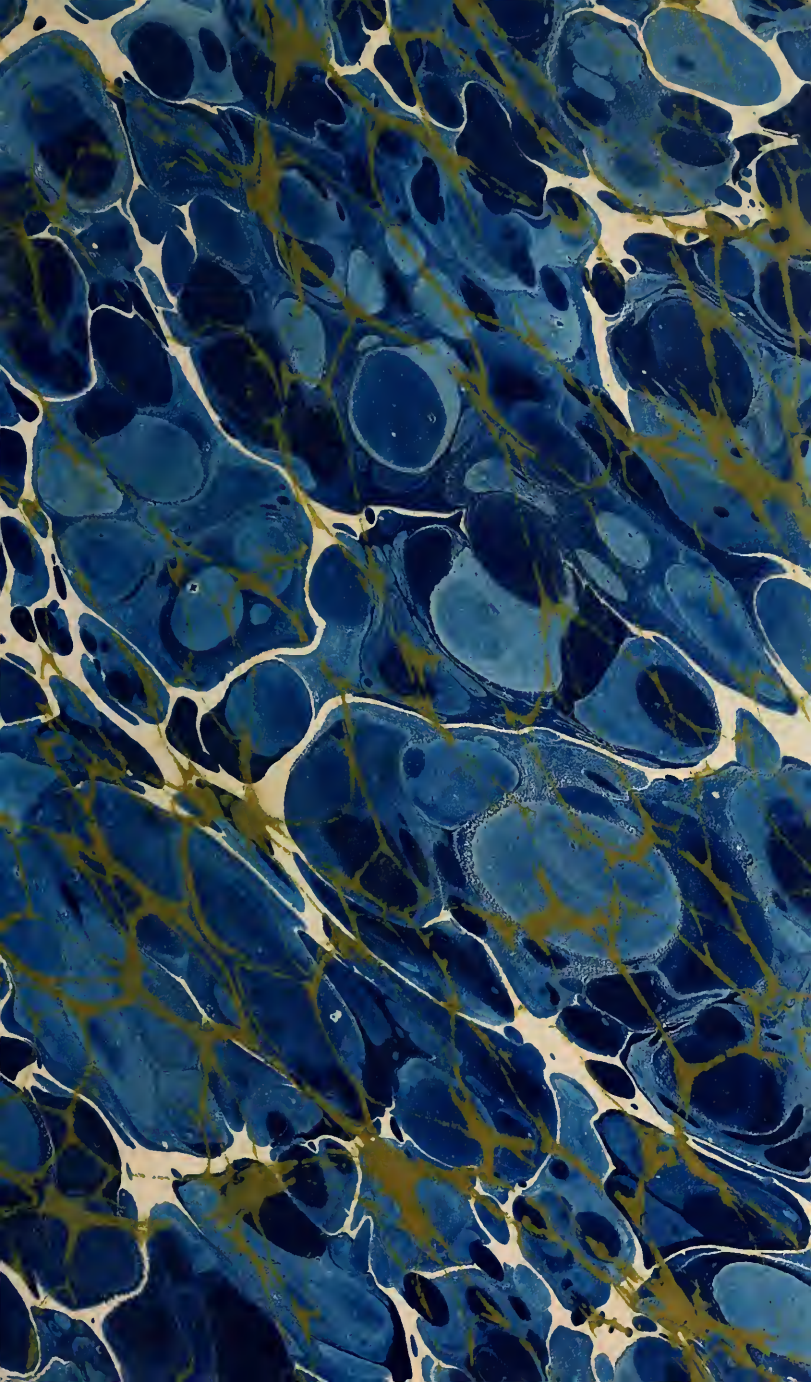
A
A
0
0
1
3
9
6
9
9
3
6



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY







(3) vol. set

75-



MARSTON;
OR, THE
SOLDIER AND STATESMAN.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
GILBERT & RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

MARSTON:

OR, THE

SOLDIER AND STATESMAN.

BY THE

REV. GEORGE CROLY, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF "SALATHIEL," &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1847.

MARSTON,
OR
MEMOIRS OF A STATESMAN.

CHAPTER XVI.

“ The tent of Alp was on the shore,
The sound was hushed, the prayer was o’er,
The watch was set, the night-round made,
All mandates, issued and obeyed.
Few hours remain, and he hath need
Of rest, to nerve for many a deed
Of slaughter ; but within his soul,
His thoughts, like troubled waters roll.”

BYRON.

THE news which I had brought, of the positions of the armies, rendered me an object of marked interest. I was questioned on every point—first, and especially, on the intentions of the commander-in-chief, with the most anxious yet most polished minuteness. But, as on this subject my lips were comparatively sealed, the state of the troops with whom they were so soon to be brought into contact, became the more manageable topic. On mentioning

that Dumourier was placed in command, I received free and full communications on the subject of his qualities, as the last hope of revolutionary France. One had known him in his early career in the engineers; another had served with him in Corsica; a third had met him at the court of Portugal; the concurring testimony being, that he was a coxcomb of the first water, showy but superficial, and, though personally brave, sure to be bewildered, when he found himself for the first time working the wheels and springs of that puzzling machine, an army in the field. But, a caustic old Provençal marquis, with his breast glittering with the stars of a whole constellation of knighthood, yet who sat with the cross-belts and cartouche-box of the rank and file upon him; agreeing with all the premises, stoutly denied the conclusions. "He is a coxcomb, I own;" said the old Marquis. "But then, he is only the fitter to command an army of upstarts.—He has seen nothing but Corsican service; well, he is the fitter to command an army of banditti—he has been an *espion* in Portugal; and what better training could he have, for heading an army of traitors?—Rely upon it, gentlemen, that you have mistaken his character, if you think that he is not the very man whom the mob of Paris *ought* to have chosen for their general.—I only recommend, that when you go into action, you should leave your watches in camp; and, if you charge any of his battalions, look well to your purses."

The old soldier's sally restored our good humour; but the man best acquainted with the French commander-

in-chief, was my friend the chevalier at the head of the table. "It has singularly enough," said he, "happened to me, to have met M. Dumourier in almost every scene of his life. Our first meeting was, in the military hospital in Toulouse; where he had been sent, like myself, to recover from the wounds of our last German campaign. He was then a coxcomb, but a clever one, full of animal spirits, and intoxicated with the various honours, of having survived the German bullets, of being appointed to a company, and of wearing a *croix*.—Our next meeting was in Portugal. Our minister had adopted some romantic idea of shaking the English influence there; and Dumourier had been sent as an engineer, to reconnoitre the defences of the country. The word *espion* was not wholly applicable to his mission, although there can be no doubt that the memoir which he brought back with him, was *not* a volume of travels.—His services recommended him to the Government, and he was sent to Corsica. There again I met him, as my regiment formed part of the force in the island. He was now high on the staff, our intercourse was renewed, and he was regarded as a very expert diplomatist.—A few years after, I found him in a still higher situation, a favourite of De Choiseul, and managing the affairs of the Polish confederation.—On his return to Paris, such was the credit in which he stood, that he was placed by the minister of war at the head of a commission to reform the military code; thus he has been always distinguished; and has at least enjoyed experience."

Even this slight approach to praise was evidently

unpopular among the circle, and I could hear murmurs.

“Distinguished!—yes, but more with the pen than the sword.”

“Diplomacy!—the business of a clerk.—Command is another affair.”

“Mon cher Chevalier,” said the old Marquis, with a laugh, “pray, after being in so many places with him, were you ever with him in the Bastile?” This was followed with a roar of merriment.

I saw my friend’s swarthy cheek burn. He started up, and was about to make some fierce retort; when a fine old man, a general, with as many orders as the marquis, and a still whiter head, averted the storm, by saying, “Whether the chevalier was with M. Dumourier in that predicament, I know not; but I can say, that *I* was.—I was sent there for the high offence of kicking a page of the court down the grande escalier at Versailles for impertinence; at the same time when M. Dumourier was sent there by *Lettre de Cachet*, for knowing more than the minister.—I assure you, I found him a most agreeable personage; very gay, very witty, and very much determined to pass his time in the pleasantest manner imaginable.—But our companionship was too brief for a perfect union of souls,” said he, laughing; “for I was liberated within a week, while he was left behind for, I think, the better part of a year.”

“But his talents?” was the question down the table.

“Gentlemen,” said the old man, “*my* experience in life has always made me judge of talents, by circumstances.—If, for example, I find that a man has

the talent exactly fitted for his position, I give him credit for all—he had the talent for making the Bastile endurable, and I required no other.—But there were times when graver topics varied our pleasantries, and he exhibited very various intelligence, a practical experience of the chief European courts, and, I am sorry to say, a very striking contempt for their politics and their politicians alike.—He was especially indignant at the selfish perfidy with which the late king had given him up to the ignorant jealousy of the minister, and looked forward to the new reign, with a resolute, and sometimes a gloomy, determination to be revenged.—If that man is a republican, it is the Bastile that has made him one; and if he ever shall have a fair opportunity of displaying his genius; unless a cannon-ball stops his career; I should conceive him capable of producing a powerful impression in Europe.”

The conversation might again have become stormy, but for the entrance of a patrol, for whom a vacant space at the table had been left. Forty or fifty fine, tall fellows now came, laughing, into the room, flinging down shakos, knapsacks, and sabres, and fully prepared to enjoy the good cheer provided for them. I heard the names of the first families of France among those privates—the Montmorencies, the Lamoignons, the Nivernois, the Rochefoucaults, the De Noailles, “familiar as household words.” All was good-humour again. They just had a little adventure, in scaring away a corps of the rustic National Guards, who, to expedite their escape, had flung away their arms, which were brought in as

good prize. The festivity and frolic of youth, engaged in a cause which conferred a certain dignity even on their *tours de page*, renewed the pleasantry of the night. We again had the *chansons*; some gay, some touching; and I remember one, sung with exquisite taste by a handsome Italian-faced youth, a nephew of its writer, the Duc de Nivernois.

The duke had requested a ringlet, of a beautiful woman. She answered, that she had just found a grey hair among her locks, and must now give them away no more. The gallant reply was—

“ Quoi ! vous parlez de cheveux blancs !
 Laissez, laissez courir le temps ;
 Que vous importe son ravage ?
 Les tendres cœurs en sont exempts ;
Les Amours sont toujours enfants,
Et les Graces sont de tout age.
 Pour moi, Thémire, je le sens.
 Je suis toujours dans mon printemps,
 Quand je vous offre mon hommage.
 Si je n'avais que dixhuit ans,
 Je pourrais aimer plus longtemps,
 Mais, non pas aimer davantage*.”

On returning to look for my distinguished pri-

* Lovely and loved ! shall one slight hair
 Touch thy delicious lip with care ?
 A heart like thine may laugh at Time—
 The Soul is ever in its prime.
 All Loves, you know, have infant faces,
 A thousand years can't chill the Graces !
 While thou art in my soul enshrined,
 I give all sorrows to the wind.
 Were I this hour but gay eighteen,
 Thou couldst be but my bosom's queen ;
 I might for longer years adore,
 But could not, could not love thee more.

soner, I found a packet lying on the table of my apartment; it had arrived in my absence with the troops in advance; and I must acknowledge, that I opened it with a trembling hand, when I saw that it came from London, and Mordecai.

It was written in evident anxiety, and its chief subject was the illness of his daughter. She had some secret on her mind, which utterly baffled even the Jew's paternal sagacity. "No letters had reached either of them from France," and he almost implored me to return, or, if that were impossible, to write without delay.—"Mariamne had grown more fantastic, more capricious, and more feeble than ever. Her eyes had lost their brightness, and her cheek its colour. Yet she complained of nothing, beyond a general distaste to existence.—She had seen the Comtesse de Tourville, and they had many a long conference together, from which, however, Mariamne always returned more melancholy.—She had even refused the match which his wish had provided for her, and declared her determination to live, like the daughter of Jephthah, single, to her grave."

The letter then turned on my own circumstances, and entered into them with the singular mixture of ardour and sneering which formed this extraordinary character.

"I am doing public business here, as indefatigably as if I were robbing nabobs in India, or setting up republics at home. The tardiness of the Horse Guards in your affair, is to be moved by nothing but an invasion; and it would be almost as rational to wait the growth of an oak, as to wait the signing of your

commission;—but it shall be done. I have means which can make the tardy quick, and open the eyes of the blind. You *shall* be a subaltern in the Guards, unless you are in too much haste to be a general, and get yourself shot by some Parisian cobbler from behind a hedge. But, let me tell you one fact, and I might indorse this piece of intelligence ‘Secret and Confidential,’ to the English cabinet, for even our great minister has yet to learn it—*the Allies will never reach Paris*. Rely, and act, upon this. They might, at this moment, enter the capital, if, instead of bayonets, they carried only trusses of straw. The road is open before them, but they will look only behind. The war was almost a feint from the beginning.—The invasion was the second act of the farce—the retreat will be the third. Poland has been the *true object*; and, to cover the substantial seizures there, has been the chief trick of the French invasion.—In one month, from the date of this letter, there will not be an Austrian or Prussian cartridge to be found in France. Potsdam and Schœnbrun know more on the subject than the duke. I write to you, as a friend, and by Mariamne’s especial order, ‘to take care of yourself.’ I have seen the retreats of continental armies; they are always a scene of horrors. Follow the army so long as it advances; then, all is well, and even the experience of service may be of use to you. But, the moment that you find it come to a stop, turn your horse’s head to any point of the compass but the front, and ride to the nearest seaport. The duke is a brave man, and his army is a brave army; but its escape will be only by miracle.—You have doubtless been

captivated with his wit, and his accomplishments. I have known him long, and well. But, Europe, within a month, will decry him, as a fugitive, a fool, and a dastard. Such is popular justice. A pupil of the first warrior of Prussia, and wanting only experience to do honour to the lessons of Frederick, he will be laughed at by the loose loungers of the Palais Royal, as ignorant of the art of war; and branded by the graver loungers of courts and councils, as ignorant of the art of government.—Once more, I say, take care of yourself. The first step in retreat will raise all France against the Allies. Ten victories would not cost as much as the first week's march towards the frontier. Every thicket will have its platoon; every hand, for a hundred leagues round, will be on the trigger. Robbery and murder, famine and fatigue, disease and death, will be upon the march; the retreat will become a flight, and happy is the man who will ever see the Rhine again. Be wise in time."

Enclosed was a brief note from Mariamne.

"Sir,—You must not think me dying, because I importune you no longer. But, *can* you give me any tidings of Lafontaine? I know that he is rash, wild, enthusiastic; but I equally know, that he is faithful and true. *Yet*, if he *has* forgotten me, or is married, or is any thing that, as a preux chevalier, he ought not to be, tell me at once; and you shall see how grateful I can be; before I cease to be any thing. But, if he has fallen—if, in the dreadful scenes of Paris, Lafontaine is no more—*tell me not*.—Write some deluding thing to me, conceal your terrible knowledge. I should not wish to drop down dead

before my father's face.—He is looking at me while I write this, and I am trying to laugh; with a heart as heavy as lead, and eyes that can scarcely see the paper. No—for mercy's sake, do not tell me, *that he is dead*. Give me gentle words, give me hope, deceive me—as they give laudanum to the dying, not to prolong life, but to lull agony. Do this, and with my last pulse I shall be grateful—with my last breath I shall bless you.”

Poor Mariamne! I had, at least, better hopes than those for her. But, within this billet was a third. It was but a few lines; yet at the foot of those lines was the signature—“Clotilde de Tourville.” The light almost forsook my eyes; my head swam; if the paper had been a talisman, and every letter written with the pen of magic, it could not have produced a more powerful effect upon me. My hands trembled, and my ears thrilled; and yet it contained but a few unimportant words—an inquiry addressed to Mariamne, whether she could forward a letter to the Chateau Montauban in Champagne, or whether her father had any correspondent in the vicinity, who could send her the picture of a beloved relative, which, in their flight to England, they had most reluctantly left behind.

The note at once threw every thing else into the background. What were invasions and armies—what were kings and kingdoms—to the slightest wish of the being who had written that billet? All this I admit to be the fever of the mind—a waking dream—an illusion, to which mesmerism is but a frivolity. Like all fevers, it is destined to pass away,—or kill

the patient; yet, for the time, what on earth is so strange, or so powerful—so dangerous to the reason—so delicious to the soul!

But, after the long reverie into which I sank, with the writing of Clotilde in my hand; I recollected that fortune had, for once, given me the power of meeting the wishes of this noble and beautiful creature. The resemblance of the picture, which had so much perplexed and attracted me, was now explained. *I was* in the Chateau de Montauban, and I now blessed the chance which had sent me to its honoured walls.

To hasten to the chamber where I was again to look upon the exquisite resemblance, of features which, till then, I had thought without a similar in the world, was a matter of instinct; and winding my way through the intricacies of galleries and corridors, loaded with the baggage of the emigrant army, and strewn with many a gallant noble, who had exchanged the down bed of his ancestral mansion for the bare floor; I at length reached the apartment, to which the captive general had been consigned. To my utter astonishment, instead of the silence which I expected under the circumstances, I heard the jingling of glasses, and roars of laughter. Was this the abode of solitude and misfortune? I entered, and found M. La Fayette, indeed, conducting himself with the composure of a personage of his rank; but the other performers exhibiting a totally different temperament.—A group of Polish officers, who had formerly borne commissions in the royal service, and now followed the emigrant troops, had recognized La Fayette, and insisted on

paying due honours to the "noble comrade" with whom they had served beyond the Atlantic. Hamlet's menace to his friend, that he would "teach him to drink deep ere he depart," had been adopted in the amplest sense by those jovial sons of the north, and "healths pottle deep" were sent round the board with rapid circulation.

My entrance but slightly deranged the symposium, and I was soon furnished with all the freemasonry of the feast, by being called on to do honour to the toast of "His Majesty, the King of Great Britain." My duty was now done, my initiation was complete, and while my eyes were fixed on the portrait which, still in its unharmed beauty, looked beaming on the wild revel below; I heard, in the broken queries, and interjectional panegyrics, of these hyperborean heroes, more of the history of La Fayette, than I had ever expected to reach my ears.

His life had been the strongest contrast to the calm countenance, which I saw so tranquilly listen to its own tale.—It was Quixotic, and, two hundred years ago, it could scarcely have escaped the pen of some French Cervantes. He had begun his career as an officer in the French household troops, in absolute boyhood. At sixteen he had married! at eighteen he had formed his political principles, and begun his soldiership by crossing the Atlantic, and offering his sword to the Republic. To meet the thousand wonderings at his conduct, he haughtily exchanged the ancient motto of the La Fayettes, for a new one of his own. The words, "Why not?" were his answer to all, and they were sufficient.

In America he was even more republican than the Republicans. His zeal was a passion, his love of liberty a romance, his hostility to the power of England an universal scorn of established power. But if fantastic, he was bold; and if too hot for the frigidity of America, he was but preparing to touch France with kindred fire.

While this narrative was going on, mingled with bumpers, and bursts of Slavonic goodfellowship, I could not help asking myself, whether Lavater was not a quack, and physiognomy a folly? Could this be the dashing Revolutionist? No plodder at the desk ever wore a more broadcloth countenance; an occasional smile was even the only indication of his interest in jovialities passing around him. He evidently avoided taking a share in the discussion of his Transatlantic career; probably from delicacy to his English auditor. But, when the conversation turned upon France, the man came forth; and he vindicated his political principles, with a spirit that told me what he might have been, when the blood of youth was added to the glow of imagination. He was now evidently exhausted by toil, and dispirited by disappointment.—No man could be more thoroughly ruined; baffled in theory, undone in practice; an exile from his country, a fugitive from his army; overwhelmed by the hopelessness of giving a constitution to France;—with nothing but the dungeon before him, and the crash of the guillotine behind.—There sat the idol of a fantastic popularity.

“What was to be done?” said La Fayette. “France was bankrupt—the treasury was empty—the pro-

fligate reign of Louis XV. had at once wasted the wealth, dried up the resources, and corrupted the mind of France. Ministers wrung their hands, the king sent for his confessor, the queen wept—but the nation groaned.—In 1787 the Assembly of the Notables was summoned. It was the first time since the reign of Henry IV. France had been a stern and formal despotism for almost two hundred years. She had seen England extend from an island into an empire; she had seen America extend from a colony into a continent. What had been the worker of the miracle?—Liberty. While all the despotisms remained within the boundaries; fixed centuries ago, like vast dungeons, never extending, and never opening to the light and air, except through the dilapidations of time; I saw England and America spreading, like fertile fields, open to every breath of heaven and every beam of day, expanding from year to year by the cheerful labour of man, and every year covered with new productiveness for the use of universal mankind.—There may have been rashness in urging the experiment—there may have been a dangerous disregard of the actual circumstances of the people, of the time, and of the world—the hand of the philosopher may have drawn down the lightning too suddenly, to be safe; the patriot may have flashed his torch too strongly, on eyes so long trained to the dungeon.—The leader of the enterprise himself, like the first discoverer of fire, may have been destined only to bring down wrath upon his own head, and be condemned to have his vitals gnawed in loneliness and chains;—but nothing shall convince La Fayette, that a great work

has not been begun for the living race, for all nations, and for all posterity."

I could not suppress the question—"But, when will the experiment be complete? When will the tree thus planted in storms, take hold of the soil? When will the tremendous tillage, which begins, by clearing with the conflagration, and ploughing with the earthquake; teem with the harvest, and bring peace to the people?"

"Those must be the legacy to our children," was the reply, in a grave, and almost contrite, tone. "The works of man are rapid, only when they are meant for decay.—The American savage builds his wigwam in a week, to last but for a year.—The Parthenon took half an age, and the treasures of a people; to last for ever."

We parted, for the night—and for thirty years. My impression of this remarkable man was, that he had more heart than head; that a single idea had engrossed his faculties, to the exclusion of all others; that he was following a phantom, with the belief that it was a substantial form; and that, like the idolaters of old, who offered their children to their frowning deity, he imagined, that the costlier the sacrifice, the surer was the propitiation.—Few men have been more misunderstood, in his own day, or in ours. Lifted to the skies, for an hour, by popular adulation; he has been sunk into obscurity ever since by historic contempt. Both were mistaken. He was the man made for the time—precisely the middle term, between the reign of the nobility and the reign of the populace. Certainly, not the man

to "ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm;" but as certainly, altogether superior to the indolent luxury of the class among whom he was born. Glory and liberty, the two highest impulses of our common nature, sent him, at two and twenty, from the most splendid court in Europe, to the swamps and snows, the dreary service and dubious battles, of America.—Eight years of voyages, negotiations, travels, and exposure to the chances of the field, proved his energy; and at the age of thirty, he had drawn upon himself the eyes of the world. *There*, he ought to have rested, or have died.—But the Revolution swept him off his feet. It was an untried power; a conflict of elements unknown to the calculation of man; he was whirled along by a force which whirled the monarchy, the church, and the nation along with him.

I have no honour for a similar career, and no homage for a similar memory; but it is from those mingled characters, that history derives her deepest lesson, her warnings for the weak, her cautions for the ambitious, and her wisdom for the wise.

On the breaking up of the party for the night, my first act was, to summon the old Swiss and his wife who had been left in charge of the mansion, and collect from them all that their feeble memories could tell of Clotilde. But Madame la Maréchale was a much more important personage in their old eyes, than the "*charmante et belle*" whom they had dandled on their knees, and who was likely to remain an infant to them during their lives. The chateau had been the retreat of the Maréchale after

the death of her husband ; and it was in its stately grounds, and in the woods and wilds which surrounded it for many a league, that Clotilde had acquired those accomplished tastes, and that characteristic dignity and force of mind, which distinguished her from her country-women, however elegant and attractive, who had been trained in the *salons* of the court. The green glades and fresh airs of the forest had given beauty to her cheek and grace to her form ; and, scarcely conceiving how the rouged and jewelled Maréchale could have endured such an absence from the circles of the young queen, and the “*beaux restes*” of the wits and beauties of the court of Louis the XVth, I thanked in soul the fortunate necessity which had driven her from the atmosphere of the Du Barrys, to the shades thus sacred to innocence and knowledge.

But the business of the hour was still to be done. —The picture was taken down at last, to the great sorrow of the old servants, who seemed to regard it as a patron saint, and who declared that its presence, and its presence alone, could have saved the mansion. The “patriots,” generally beginning their reforms of the nobility by laying their chateaux in ashes. But the will of Madame la Maréchale was to them as the laws of the Medes and Persians, irresistible and unchangeable ; and with heavy hearts they dismounted the portrait, and assisted in enfolding and encasing it, with much the same feeling that might have been shown in paying the last honours to a branch of the beloved line.

But, in the wall which the picture had covered, I

found a small recess, closed by an iron door, and evidently unknown to the Swiss and his old wife. I might have hesitated about extending my inquiry further, but time, the discoverer of all things, saved my conscience. With a slight pressure against the lock it gave way; the door flew open, and dropped off the hinges, a mass of rust. Within was a casket, of a larger size than that generally used for jewels; but my curiosity durst not go beyond the superscription, which was—a consignment of the casket, by the Maréchale, to her banker in London. Whatever might be the contents, it was clear that, like the picture, it had been left behind in the hurry of flight, and that to transmit both to England, was fairly within my commission. Before our busy work was done, day was glancing in through the coloured panes of the huge old chamber. I hurried off the Swiss, with those precious possessions, to the next town, in one of the baggage carts; with a trooper in front to prevent his search by hands still more hazardous than those of a custom-house officer. And then, mounting my horse, and bidding a brief farewell to the brave and noble fellows, who were already mustering for the march, and envying me with all their souls; I set off at full speed to rejoin the army.

Yet, with all my speed, the action had begun some hours before I came in sight of the field. With what pangs of heart, I heard the roar of the cannon, for league on league, while I was threading my bewildered way, and spurring my tired horse through the miry paths of a country alternately marsh and forest; with what pantings I looked from every successive

height, to discover, even to what quarter the smoke of the firing might direct me ; with what eager vexation I questioned every hurrying peasant ; who either shook his moody head, and refused to answer, or who answered, with the fright of one expecting to have his head swept off his shoulders by some of my fierce looking troop, I shall not now venture to tell. At length, exhausted by mortal fatigue, and ready to lie down and die, I made a last effort. I ordered the troop to halt where they were, pushed on alone, and, winding my way through a forest covering the side of a low but abrupt hill, or rather succession of hills, I suddenly burst out into the light, and saw the whole battle beneath, around, and before me. It was magnificent.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ The night is past, and shines the sun
As if that morn were a jocund one.
Lightly and brightly breaks away
The morning from her mantle grey—
And the noon will look as a sultry day.
Hark to the trump and the drum,
And the mournful sound of the barbarous horn,
And the flap of the banners, that flit as they’re borne,
And the neigh of the steed, and the multitude’s hum,
And the clash and the shout, ‘ They come, they come.’ ”

BYRON.

THE action was a series of those grand manœuvres in which the Prussians excelled all the other troops of Europe. From the spot on which I stood, the whole immense plain, to the foot of the defiles of Argonne, was visible ; but the combat, or rather the succession of combats, was fought along the range of hills at the distance of some miles. These I could discover only by the roar of the guns, and by an occasional cloud of smoke rising among the trees. The chief Prussian force stood in columns in the plain below me, in dark masses, making an occasional movement in advance from time to time, or sending a mounted officer to the troops in action.

Parks of artillery lay formed in the spaces between the columns; and the baggage, a much more various and curious sight than the troops, halting in the wide grounds of what seemed some noble mansion, had already begun to exhibit the appearance of a country fair.

Excepting this busy part of the scene, few things struck me, as less like what I had conceived of actual war, than the quietude of all before and around me. The columns might nearly as well have been masses of rock; and the engagement in front was so utterly lost to view in the forest, that, except for the occasional sound of the cannon, I might have looked upon the whole scene, as a colossal picture of a quiet Flemish holiday.—The landscape was beautiful. Some showery nights had revived the verdure, of which France has so seldom to boast in her autumn; and the green of the plain almost rivalled the delicious verdure of home. The chain of hills, extending for many a league, was covered with one of the most extensive forests in the kingdom. The colours of this vast mass of foliage were glowing in all the powerful hues of the declining year; and the clouds which slowly descended upon the horizon, with all the tinges of the west burning through their folds, appeared to be scarcely more than a loftier portion of those sheets of gold and purple which shone along the crown of the hills.

But, while I lingered, gazing on the rich and tranquil luxury of the scene, and almost forgetting that there was war in the world; I was suddenly recalled to a more substantial condition of that world, by a

trumpet; and the arrival of my troop, who had at length struggled up the hill, evidently surprised at finding me still there, when the suttlers were in full employment within a few hundred yards below me. Their petition was unanimous, to be allowed to refresh themselves and their horses at this rare opportunity; and their request, though respectful in its words, was yet so decisive in its tone, that, to comply was fully as much my policy as my inclination. I mounted my horse, and proceeded, according to the humble "command" of my brave dragoons. This was a most popular movement—the men, the very horses, evidently rejoiced. The fatigue of our hard riding had passed away at once—the riders laughed and sang, the chargers snorted and pranced; and, when we trotted, huzzaing, into the baggage lines, half their motley crowd evidently conceived, that some sovereign prince was come, in fiery haste, to make the campaign. We were received with all the applause, that is given by the suttler to all arrivals, with a full purse in the holsters, and a handsome valise, no matter from what source filled, on the croup of the charger. But we had scarcely begun to taste the gifts that fortune had sent us in the shape of huge sausages and brown bread—the *luxuries*! for which the soldier of Teutichland wooes the goddess of war—than we found ourselves ordered to move off the ground, by the peremptory mandate of a troop of the Royal Guard, who had followed our movement, more hungry, more thirsty, and more laced and epauletted than ourselves. My Hulans tossed their lances; and it had been nearly a business

of cold steel, when their officer rode up to demand the sword of the presumptuous mutineer who had thus daringly questioned his right to starve us. While I was deliberating, for a moment, between the shame of a forced retreat, and the awkwardness of our taking the bull by the horns, in the shape of the King's Guard; I heard a loud laugh, and my name pronounced, or rather roared, in the broadest accents of Germany. My friend Vornhorst was the man. The indefatigable and good-humoured Vornhorst, who did every thing, and was every where, was soon shaking my hand with the honest grasp of his honest nature, and congratulating me on my return.

"We have to do with a set of sharp fellows," said he, "in these French; a regiment of their light cavalry has somehow or other made its way between the columns of our infantry, and has been picking up stragglers all last night. The duke, with whom you happen to have established a favouritism, that would make you a chamberlain at the court of Brunswick, if you were not previously assassinated by the envy of his chamberlains, or pinked by some lover of the "*dames d'honneur*," was beginning to be uneasy about you; and, as I had the peculiar good fortune of the Chevalier Marston's acquaintance, I was sent to pick him up, if he had fallen in honourable combat in the plains of Champagne, or if any fragment of him were recoverable from the hands of the peasantry, to preserve it for the family mausoleum."

I anxiously enquired the news of the army, and the progress of the great operation which was then going on.

"We have beaten every thing before us, for these three hours," was the answer. "The resistance in the plain was slight, for the French evidently intended to make their stand only in the forest. But the duke has pushed them strongly on the right flank, and, as you may perceive, the attack goes on, in force." He pointed to the entrance of one of the defiles, where several columns were in movement, and where the smoke of the firing rose thickly above the trees. He then laid his watch on the table, beside our champagne flask. "The time is come to execute another portion of my orders. What think you of following me, and seeing a little of the field?"

"Nothing could delight me more. I am perfectly at your service."

"Then mount, and in five minutes I shall show you one of the first officers in Europe, the Count Clairfait; he is a Walloon, 'tis true; and has the ill luck to be an Austrian brigadier besides; and, to finish his misfortune, has served only against the Turks. But, for all that, if any man in the army now in the field is fit to succeed to the command, that man is the Count Clairfait.—I only wish that he were a Prussian."

"Has he had any thing to do in the campaign?"

"Every thing that has been done. He has commanded the whole advanced guard of the army; and let me whisper this in your ear—if his advice had been taken a week ago, we should by this time have been smoking our cigars in the Palais Royal."

"I am impatient to be introduced to the Count; let us mount and ride on." He looked at his watch again.

“Not for ten minutes to come. If I made my appearance before him, five minutes in advance of the time appointed by my orders, Clairfait would order me into arrest, if I were his grandmother. He is the strictest disciplinarian between this and the North Pole.”

“A faultless monster himself, I presume.”

“Nearly so; he has but one fault; he is too fond of the sabre and bayonet. ‘Charge,’ is his word of command. His school was among the Turks, and he fights *à la Turque*.”

“I should like him the better for it. That dash and daring is the very thing for success.”

“Ay, ay—edge and point are good things in their way. But they are the temptations of the general. Frederick’s maxim was—“The bullet for the infantry, the spur for the dragoon.” The weight of fire is the true test of infantry, the rapidity of charge the true test of cavalry. The business of a general is manœuvring—to menace masses by greater masses, to throw the weight of an army on a flank, or pierce a centre while the flanks are forced to stand by, and see it beaten; those were Frederick’s lessons to his staff: and if Clairfait shall go on, with his perpetual hand-to-hand work, those sharp Frenchmen will soon learn his trade, and perhaps pay him back in his own coin. But, Halt squadron. Dress—advance in parade order.”

While I was thus taking my first lesson in the art of heroes, we had rode through a deep ravine; from which, with some difficulty, we struggled our way to a space of more level ground. Our dis-

order on reaching it, required all the count's ready skill, to bring us into a condition fit for the eye of this formidable Walloon. But we were scarcely complete, when a group of mounted officers were seen advancing from a column of glittering lances and sabres, which rested on the distant verge of the plain. My friend pronounced the name of Clairfait, and I was soon introduced to the officer, who was afterwards to play so distinguished a part in the gallant and melancholy history of the Flemish fields. I had pictured to myself the broad, plump face of the Fleming. I saw a countenance, darkened probably by the sultry exposure of his southern campaigns, but of singular depth and power. It was impossible to doubt, that within the noble forehead before me, was lodged an intelligence of the first order. His manners were cold, yet not uncourteous, and to me he spoke with more than usual attention. But, when he alluded to the proceedings of the day, and was informed by Vornhorst that the time appointed for his movement was come, I never saw a more rapid transition, from the phlegm of the Netherlander to the vividness of the man of courage and genius. Waiting, with his watch in his hand, for the exact moment appointed in the despatch, it had no sooner arrived, than his whole force, of Austrian light infantry and cavalry, moved forward. Nothing could be more regular than the march, for the first half mile; we then entered a portion of the forest, or rather its border, thinly scattered over an extent of broken country: and, to preserve the regularity of our movement, soon began to be wholly impossible. The officers gave up the

attempt in despair, but the troops enjoyed the disorder in the highest degree. The ground was so intersected with small trenches, cut by the foresters, that every half dozen yards presented a leap, and the clumps of bushes made it continually necessary to break the ranks. Wherever I looked, I now saw nothing but the animation of an immense skirmish, the use of sabre and pistol alone excepted. Between two and three thousand cavalry, mounted on the finest horses of Austria and Turkey, were galloping in all directions, some springing over the rivulets, some dashing through the thickets, all in the highest spirits, calling out to each other, laughing at each other's mishaps, their horses in as high spirits as themselves, bounding, rearing, neighing, springing like deer; trumpets sounding, standards tossing, officers commanding in tones of helpless authority, to which no one listened, and at which they themselves often laughed. The whole was like a vast school broke loose for a holiday; the most joyous, sportive, and certainly the most showy, display that had ever met my eye. The view strongly reminded me of some of the magnificent old hunting pieces of Snyders, the field sports of the Archduke Ferdinand; we had every thing but the stag, or the boar, and the dogs. We had the noble trees, the rich deep glades, the sunny openings, the masses of verdure; and all crowded with life. But how infinitely superior in interest! No holiday sport, or imperial pageant, but an army rushing into action; one of the great instruments of human power and human change called into full energy; thousands of bold lives about to be pe-

rilled ; a victory about to be achieved, which might fix the fate of Europe ; or perhaps losses to be sustained, which might cover the future generation with clouds ; and all this is on the point of being done.—No lazy interval to chill expectancy ; within the day, within the hour, nay, within the next five hundred yards, the decisive moment might come.

Still, we rushed on ; the staff pausing from time to time to listen to the distant cannonade, and ascertain by its sound, the progress of the attack, which had already been made on the great centre, and right, defiles of the forest. In one of these pauses, while I had ridden up as near as the broken ground would suffer, towards Count Clairfait, he made a gesture to me, to look upwards, and I observed, almost for the first time, a smile on his countenance. I followed the gesture, and saw, what to me was the novelty, of a huge shell, leisurely, as it seemed, traversing the air. The count and his staff immediately galloped off in all directions ; but I had not rode a hundred yards, when the shell dropped into the spot where I had been standing, and burst with a tremendous explosion almost immediately on its touching the ground. The cavalry had dispersed, and the explosion was, I believe, without injury. But this, at least, gave evidence that the enemy were not far off, and the eagerness of the troops was excited to the highest pitch : all now pressed forward to the front, and their cries, in all the languages of the frontier of Europe, the voices of the officers, and the clangour of the bugles and trumpets, became an absolute Babel, but an infinitely bold and joyous one. The

yagers were now ordered to clear the way, and a thousand Tyrolese and Transylvanian sharpshooters hurried forward to line the border. A heavy firing commenced, and orders were given, to halt the cavalry until the effect of the fire was produced. This was speedily observed; the enemy, evidently in inferior force, and unprepared for this attack, gave way; and the first squadrons which reached the open ground made a dash among them, and took the greater part prisoners.

The whole day was full of splendid exhibitions. On reaching the edge of the plain, the first object below us, was the succession of deep columns which I had seen some hours before, and which appeared to have been rooted to the ground ever since. But an aide-de-camp from the circle where the count stood, darted down on the plain, and, as if a flash of lightning had awoke them, all were instantly in motion. The columns on the right now made a sudden push forward, and four or five strong brigades, which rapidly followed, as if they had started from the earth, took up their position.

Vornhorst, who had been beside me during the whole day, now exhibited great delight. "I told you," said he, "that Clairfait would turn out well. I see that he has been taught in our school. Observe that manœuvre;" he continued his comment with increasing force of gesture—"That was the Great Frederick's favourite, the oblique formation; the finest invention in tactics; with that, he gained Rosbach, and beat the French and Austrians; with that he gained the battle of Breslau; and with that he

gained the grand fight of Torgau, and finished the war. Yet the king always said, that he had learned the manœuvre from Epaminondas, and was only fighting the battle of Leuctra over again.—But, look there !” He pointed to a rising ground, a bluff of the forest ridge, to which a battalion of sharpshooters were hastening; it had seemed destitute of defence, and the sharpshooters were already beginning to scramble up its sides; when a large body of the enemy which had been covered by the forest, ascended its summit with a shout, and poured down a general volley. The whole Prussian line returned it by one tremendous discharge. The drums and trumpets clanged, and the battalions and squadrons advanced, singing the national hymn. The skirmishers now poured forward and the battle began. How shall I speak of what I felt at that moment; the sensation was indescribable ! It was mingled of all feelings, but personal ones. I was absorbed in that glorious roar, in that bold burst of human struggle, in all that was wild, ardent, and terrible in the power of man. I had not a thought of any thing, but of the martial pomp and spirit-stirring grandeur of the scene before me.

But, I was aroused from my contemplations by the loud laugh of my veteran friend; who was trying the contents of a large brandy flask, which I remembered, and with some not very respectful opinion of his temperance, to have seen him place in one of his holsters at our visit to the suttlers. He offered it to me. “You look wretchedly pale,” said he; “our style of life is too rough for you gentlemen *diplomats*,

and you will find this glass, right Nantz; the very best thing, if not the only good thing, that its country has to give." This dislodged me from my heroics at once; the brandy was first-rate, and I found myself restored to the level of the world, and infinitely the better for the operation.

We now followed the advance of the troops. The leading columns had already forced their way into the entrance of the forest; but it was a forest of three leagues in depth and twice the number in length, a wooded province, and the way was to be fought foot by foot. It is only justice to the French to say, that they fought well—held the pass boldly—often charged our advance, and gave way only when they were on the point of being surrounded. But, our superiority of discipline and numbers combined, did not suffer the success to be for a moment doubtful. Still, as we followed, the battle raged in the depths of the forest, already as dark as if night had come on—our only light being the incessant illumination of the musketry, and the bursts of fire from the howitzers.

As we were standing on the last height at the entrance of the defile, "Look round," exclaimed Vornhorst, "and take your first lesson in our art, if you shall ever adopt the trade of soldiership.—The Duke has outwitted the Frenchman. I suspected something of that sort in the morning, when I first heard his guns so far to the right. I allow that any general may be puzzled, for a while, who has five passes to defend, with half a dozen leagues between them; and a Prussian army in front ready to make him choose.

He has evidently drawn off the strength of his troops to the Duke's point of attack, and has stripped the wing before us. Clairfait's mass has been thrown upon it, and the day is our own. Forward!"

The roads and the surrounding glades gave fearful evidence of the obstinacy of the struggle; but it also gave some curious evidences of the force of habit, in making light of the troubles of life. The cavalry, which had been comparatively unemployed, from the nature of the service during the day; had taken advantage of the opportunity, to consult their own comfort as much as possible. On the flank and in rear of the infantry the troopers had taken the whole affair *en amateur*, and had lighted their fires, and cooked their rations, handsomely augmented by the general spoliation of the hen-coops within many a league. Something like a fair was established round them by the suttlers; while the shells were actually falling, and many a branch was shattered over their banquets by the shot which constantly whizzed through the trees. But, "*Vive la fortune!*" Even the sober Teuton, and the rough son of the Bannat, could enjoy the few chances that war gives for festivity; and what the next night or morning might bring, was not suffered to disturb their sense of "*schnapps*," and their supper.

The trampling of horses in our rear, and the arrival of the chasseurs of the ducal escort, now told us, that the generalissimo was at hand. He rode up, in high spirits, received our congratulations with princely courtesy, and bestowed praises on the troops; and especially on Clairfait, which made the

count's dark cheeks and stern features glow. The whole group now rode together, until we reached the open country. A decisive success had unquestionably been gained; and in war the first success is of proverbial importance. On this point, the duke laid peculiar weight, in the few words which he could spare to me.

"M. Marston," he observed, taking me cordially by the hand, "we are henceforth more than friends, we are '*camarades*.' We have been in the field together; and, with us Prussians, that is a tie for life."

I made my acknowledgments for his highness's condescension. Business then took the lead.

"You will now have a good despatch, to transmit to our friends in England. The Count Clairfait has shown himself worthy of his reputation.—I understand, that the enemy's force consisted chiefly of the household troops of France; if so, we have beaten the best soldiers of the kingdom, and the rest can give us but little trouble.—You will remark upon these points; and now—for Paris."

A cry, or rather a shout of assent, from the circle of officers, echoed the words; and we all put spurs to our horses, and followed the *cortége* through the noble old grove. But, before we reached its confines, the firing had wholly ceased, and the enemy were seen hurrying down the slope of the Argonne, and crossing in great disorder a plain which separated them from their main body. Our light troops and cavalry were dashing out in pursuit, and prisoners were continually taken. From the spot where we

halted, the light of the sinking day showed us the rapid breaking up of the fugitive column ; the guns, one by one, left behind ; the muskets thrown away, and the soldiers scattered ; until our telescopes could discover scarcely more than a remnant reaching the protection of the distant hill.

We supped that night on the green sward. The duke had invited his own staff, and that of Clairfait, to his tent, in honour of the day ; and I never spent a gayer evening. His incomparable polish of manners, mingled with the cordiality which no man could assume more naturally, when it was his pleasure ; and his mixture of courtly pleasantry with the bold humour which campaigning, in some degree, teaches to every one ; made him, if possible, more delightful, to my conception, than even in our first interview. Towards the close of the supper, which, like everything else round him, was worthy of Sardanapalus ; he addressed himself to me, and giving a most gracious personal opinion of what my “services had merited from the English minister,” said that, “limited as his own means of rewarding zeal and ability might be, he begged of me to retain a slight memorial of his friendship, and of our day together on the heights of Argonne.” Taking from the hand of Guiscard the riband and star of the “Order of Merit,” the famous order instituted by the Great Frederick, he placed it round my neck, and proposed my health round the table, as a “Knight of Prussia.”

This was a flattering distinction ; and, if I could have had entire faith in all the complimentary lan-

guage addressed to me by the sitters at that stately table, I should have had visions of very magnificent things. But there is no antidote to vanity equal to an empty purse. If I had been born to one of the leviathan fortunes of our peerage, I might have imagined myself possessed of all the talents of mankind; but I never could forget the grave lesson, that I was a younger son. I sat, like the Roman in his triumph, with the slave behind, to lecture him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ Now, silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies,
Now thrive the armourers, and honour’s thought
Reigns solely in the breast of every man.
For now, sits Expectation in the air ;
And hides a sword, from hilts unto the point,
With crowns imperial.”

SHAKSPEARE.

AFTER the repast ended, and the principal part of the guests had withdrawn, I was desired to wait for the communication of important intelligence—Guiscard and Vornhorst being the only officers of the staff who remained. A variety of papers, taken in the portfolio of a French general who had fallen in the engagement, were laid before us. They were of every kind, and no bad epitome of the mind of a brave coxcomb.—Reflections on the conduct of the Allied armies, and conjectures on their future proceedings—both so fantastic, that the duke’s gravity often gave way, and even the grim Guiscard sometimes wore a smile. Then came a letter from some

“*confrère*” in Paris, a tissue of gossip and grumbling, anecdotes of the irregularities of private life, and merciless abuse of the leaders of party. Interspersed with those were epistles of a more tender description; from which it appeared that the general’s heart was as capacious as his ambition; and that he contrived to give his admiration to half a dozen of the *élite* of Parisian beauty at a time. Vornhorst was delighted with this portion of the correspondence; even the presence of the duke could not prevent him from bursting into explosions of laughter; and he ended by imploring its possession, as models of his future correspondence, in any emergency which “compelled him to put pen to paper in matters of the sex.” But, nearly the last of the documents was one deserving of all attention. It was a statement of the measures enjoined by government, for raising the population in arms; and, as an appendix, a muster-roll of the various corps already on their way to join the army of Dumourier. The duke read this paper, with a countenance from which all gaiety had vanished, and handed it to Guiscard to read aloud.

“What think you of that, gentlemen?” asked the duke, in his most deliberate tone.

Vornhorst, in his bold, and unhesitating style, said—“It tells us only, that we shall have some more fighting; but, as we are sure to beat them, the more the better.—Your highness knows, as well as any man alive, that the maxim of our great master was, ‘Always begin the war by fighting as many pitched

battles as you can. Skirmishes teach discipline to the rabble. Pitched battles are thunderbolts ; they finish the business at once ; and, like the thunderbolts, they appear to defy resistance by man.’”

“ I think,” said Guiscard, with his deep physiognomy still darkening, “ that we have lost, what is the most difficult of all things to recover—time.”

The duke bit his lip. “ How was it to be helped, Guiscard ? *You* know the causes of the delay—they were many and stubborn.”

“ Ay,” was the reply, with an animation, which struck me with surprise, “ as many, as the blockheads in Berlin, and as stubborn, as the Aulic council.”

“ Well,” said the duke, turning to me, with his customary grace of manner—“ What does our friend, the Englishman, say ? ”

Of course, I made no pretence to giving a military opinion. I merely said, “ That I had every reliance on the experienced conduct of his highness, and the established bravery of his army.”

“ The truth is, M. Marston, as Guiscard says, we *have* lost time, though through no fault of ours. And I observe, from these papers, that the enemy have availed themselves of the delay, by bringing up strong corps from every point. Still, our duty lies plain before us ; we *must* advance, and rescue the unfortunate royal family—and, we *must* tranquillize France, by overthrowing the rabble influence ; we may then retire, with the satisfaction of having fought without ambition, and being victorious without a wish for

aggrandizement." After a pause, which none attempted to interrupt, he finished by saying—"I admit, that our work is likely to become more difficult, than I had supposed."

Vornhorst's sanguine nature heard this with visible reluctance. "Pardon me, your highness, but my opinion is for instant action, whatever may happen. Let us but move to-morrow morning, and I promise you another battle of Rosbach within the next twelve hours." The idea was congenial to the gallantry of the duke; he smiled, and shook the bold speaker by the hand.

"I see, by these lists," said Guiscard, as he slowly perused the returns, "that the troops with which we have been engaged to-day amounted to little more than twenty thousand men, under their new general, Dummerier. They fought badly, I think. But, I scarcely expected that they would have fought at all, since the emigration of their officers.—Sixteen or eighteen thousand men are already moving up from Flanders; a strong corps under my old acquaintance and countryman, Kellerman—and whatever he may be as an officer, a bolder and braver soldier does not exist—are coming, by forced marches, from the Rhine; the sea-coast towns are stripped of their garrisons; and I should not be surprised to find, that we rather under, than over, calculated the force, which will be in line against us within a week."

"So be it!" exclaimed Vornhorst, "What are troops, without discipline; and generals, without science? Both made to be beaten. Fifty thousand Prussians would march through Europe.—I am for

the advance.—That was a brilliant dash of Clair-fait's this afternoon. Let us match it to-morrow morning."

"It was admirable!" replied the duke, with the colour mounting to his cheek. "Any officer in Europe might envy the decision, the spirit, and the success. His sagacity in discovering the weak point of the enemy's position, and his skill in its attack, deserve all praise.—His flank movement *was* perfectly admirable."

"Well, we have only to try him again," exclaimed Vornhorst, with increasing animation. "We have turned the position, and taken a thousand prisoners, and guns. Our men are in high spirits; and, if I were in command of a corps to-morrow, my only countersign would be 'Paris.'"

"Vornhorst," said the duke, "you have only anticipated my intention with regard to yourself.—You shall have a command; the three brigades of Prussian grenadiers shall be given into your charge; and you shall operate on the flank. It is my wish to make our principal movement in that direction, and I *know* you well."

Vornhorst's gratitude almost denied him words; but his countenance always spoke better than his tongue.

One of those papers contained a detail of several projects by the leading members of the Assembly for the government of France. Guiscard, after bending his wise head over them, pronounced them all equally futile, and equally tending to democracy. The duke was of the opposite opinion, and after a glance at the

papers, observed—"that he thought some of those schemes ingenious; but that they so closely resembled the ideas thrown out in Germany, under the patronage of the emperor Joseph, as to deprive them of any strong claim to originality. No," said he gaily, "I shall never believe that Frenchmen are changed, until I hear that there is no ballet in Paris; you might as well tell me, that the Swiss will abjure the money which makes a part of his definition, as the Frenchman give up the laced coat, the powdered queue, and the order of St. Louis at his button-hole. Those things are the man, they are his mind, his senses, himself. He is a creation of monarchy—a clever, amusing, ingenious, and brave one; but, rely upon my knowledge of human nature—if French nature be any thing of the kind—that a capital without balls, and a government without embroidery, will disgust him beyond all forgiveness.—If a democracy were formed to-morrow, it would be danced away in a week; or if every pedigree in France were burned in this evening's fire, you would have the Boulevards crowded with marquises and marchionesses, before the month was over." He laughed at his own picture of a revolution, and his manner would have made his sentiments popular on any subject. Still, our long-headed friend, Guiscard, was not to be convinced.

"I have every contempt," said he, in a hurried tone, "for the shallowness of mob-orators, attempting to mould men by theories; but the question, whether France is to remain a monarchy or not, is one, of the most pressing importance to your highness's operations. It is only in this practical sense that I should

think of the topic at all. You have taken the frontier towns, and have beaten the frontier army. So far as the regular force of France is concerned, the war is at an end. But then comes the grand point—a country of thirty millions of people cannot be conquered, if they can but be roused to resist. All the troops of Europe—nay, perhaps of the earth—might perish, before they fully conquered a country so large as France, with so powerful a population. It seems even to be one of the provisions of Providence against ambition, that an invasion of a populous country is the most difficult operation in the world, unless the people welcome the invader. It gives every ditch the character of a fortress, and every man the spirit of a soldier. I recollect no instance in European history, where an established kingdom was conquered by invasion. They all stand, at this hour, as they stood a thousand years ago. In France, we have found the people without leaders, and the troops, without experience; of course, they have not resisted our hussars and guns. But—they have not joined us. In any other country of Europe, we should have had recruits, crowding to ask for service. But, the French farmer shuts up his house; the peasant flies; the citizen barricades his gates, and gives us cannon-shot for answer. The whole land rejects us, if it dares not repel; and, if we conquer, we shall have to colonize.”

“Well, we must fight them into it,” said Vornhorst.

“Or leave them to fight themselves out of it,” I observed—“my national prejudices are not favourable to reasoning at the point of the bayonet.”

“Or take the chances of the world, and float on, wherever the surge carries us,” laughed the duke.

But Guiscard was still inflexible. His deep eye flashed with a beam, for which I could never have looked, under those projecting brows. His cheek was visited by a tinge which argued a passionate interest in the subject; and, as he spoke, he showed that he might have figured in senates and councils. Of course, at this distance of time, I can offer but a faint trace of his bold and almost prophetic wisdom.

“I see no result for France, but a democracy. This war is like no other, since the fall of the Roman empire. It is a war of the passions. What man can calculate the power of those untried elements? I implore your highness to consider, with the deepest caution, every step to be taken, from this moment. Europe has no commander whom it can place in a rank with yourself; and if you, at the head of the first army of Europe, shall find it necessary to retreat before the peasantry of France; it will form a disastrous era in the art of war, and a still more disastrous omen to every crowned head of Europe.”

The duke looked uneasy. But he merely said with a smile—“My dear Guiscard, we must keep these sentiments to ourselves, in camp.—You are a cosmopolite, and look on these things with too refined a speculation. Like myself, you have dined and supped with the Diderots and Raynals—pleasant people, no doubt, but dangerous advisers.”

“I have!” exclaimed his excited hearer; “and neither I, nor any other man, could have met them

without admiring their talents. But I always looked on their *coterie*, as a sort of moral lunatics, the madder the more light they have."

"Our question is simply one of fact," said the duke.

"Yes, but of a fact, on which the fate of Europe hinges at this moment!—The monarchy of France is already cloven down. What shape of power is now to take up its fallen sword? The sovereignty of time, laws, and loyalty, is in the grave, and the funeral rites will be bloody; but what hand is to make the ground of that grave firm enough, to bear the foundations of a new throne?"

"The heels of our boots and the hoofs of our horses—they will trample it solid enough!" exclaimed Vornhorst.

"The much stronger probability is," replied Guiscard, "that they will trample it into a mire, so deep, that we may reckon the Allied powers fortunate if they ever escape from it. France is revolutionized irrecoverably. Three things have been done, within the last three months, any one of which would overthrow the strongest government on the Continent.—By confiscating the property of the rich, she has set the precedent for breaking down all property, has thrown the prize into the hands of the populace, and thus, after corrupting them by the robbery, has bound them by the bribe!—By destroying and banishing the nobility, she has done more than to extinguish an antagonist of the mob; she has swept away a protector of the people! The provinces will be helpless;

Paris will be the sovereign, and Paris itself will have the mob for its master.—By her third step, the ruin of the church, she has given the death-blow to the few and feeble feelings, which acknowledged higher objects than the things of the hour.—But, the pressing point for us is, how the Revolution will act upon the military spirit of the nation. The French may succumb; but they make good soldiers. They are the only nation in Europe who, in spite of all their defeats, regard war as their natural path to power.”

“Yet, they fly before our squadrons,” observed the duke.

“Yes, as schoolboys fly before their master; until they are strong enough to rebel; or as the Indians fled before the lances and horses of Cortes, until they became accustomed to them.—It would be infinitely wiser to leave the republicans to struggle with each other, than to unite them by a national attack.—Mobs, like the wolves, always fall upon the wounded. The first faction that receives a blow in the campaigns of the Palais Royal, will have all the others tearing it to fragments. The custom will spread; every new drop of blood will let loose a torrent in retaliation; and when France has thus been drained of her fever, will be the time, either to restore her, or to paralyse, for ever, her power of disturbing the world.”

The sound of a gun reminded us, that the hour of the evening hymn had come. It broke up our council. The incomparable harmony of so many thousand voices again ascended into the air; and at the discharge of another gun, all was still once more. The

night had now fallen, and the fatigues of the day made repose welcome. But the conversation of the last hour made me anxious to obtain all the knowledge of the country, and of the campaign, which could be obtained from Guiscard. Vornhorst, full of a soldier's impetuosity, had gone to the quarters of his grenadiers, and was busy with hurried preparations for the morrow. The duke had retired, but, through the curtains of his tent, I could see the lamps by whose light his secretaries were in attendance. With Guiscard, I continued pacing up and down in front of our quarters, listening to the observations of a mind as richly stored, and as original, as I have ever met among mankind.

He still persisted in his conviction, "that we had come at the wrong time ; it was either too early or too late ; *before* the nation had grown weary of anarchy, and *after* they had triumphed over the throne.—The rebound," said he energetically, "will be terrible. Ten times our force would be thrown away in this war. The army may drive all things before its front ; but it will be assailed in the rear, in the flanks ; every where. It is like the eruption which I have seen poured from Etna into the sea.—It drove the tide before it, and threw the surges up in vapour ; but they were too powerful for it, after all. And there stands the lava fixed and cold, and there roll the surges again, burying it for ever from the sight of man."

A sudden harmony of trumpets, from various points of the vast encampment, pierced the ear ; and in another moment the whole line of the hills was

crowned with flame. The signal for lighting the fires of the Austrian and Prussian outposts, had been given, and the effect was almost magical. In this army all things were done with a regularity almost perfect. The trumpet spoke, and the answer was instantaneous. All comparisons are feeble to realities of this order—seen, too, while the heart of man is quickened to enjoy and wonder, and feels scarcely less than a new existence, in the stirring events which occur every where round him. The first comparison that struck me was the vague one, of a shower of stars. The mountain pinnacles were in a blaze. The fires of the bivouacs soon spread through the forest, then down the slopes of the hills, and then blazed round the horizon.

The night was fine, the air flowed in freshness and fragrance from the verdure of the immense woods; and the scent of the thyme and heath-flowers, pressed by my foot, rose “wooingly on the air.” All was calm, and odorous. The flourish of the evening trumpets still continued to swell, in the rich harmonies which German skill alone can breathe, and thoughts of the past and the future began to steal over my mind.—I was once more in England, gazing on the splendid beauty of Clotilde; and again imagining the thousand forms in which my weary fortunes must be shaped, before I dared to offer her a share in my hopes of happiness.—I saw Mariamne once more; with her smile reminding me of Shakspeare’s exquisite picture—

“ Oh, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful,
In the contempt and anger of that lip !”

Then came a vision of my early home.—The halls of Mortimer castle—the feebly surviving parent there, whom I still loved—the heartless and haughty brother—the pomp and pageantry to which he was born; while I was flung out into the wilderness, like the son of the handmaid, to perish, or, like him, escape only by miracle.—“At that hour, perhaps, there were revels in the house of my fathers, while their descendant was wandering on a hill-side, in the midst of hostile armies, exposed to the chances of the conflict, and possibly only measuring with his pace the extent of his grave.” But, while I was thus sinking in heart; my hand, in some unconscious movement, struck the badge of Frederic’s order on my bosom. What trifles change the current of human thoughts! That “star” threw more light over my darkness, than the thousand constellations which studded the vault above my head. Success and public name again filled my mind. I saw things, events, and persons, through a brilliant haze of hope; and, determining to follow fortune wherever she might lead me, abjured all remembrance of calamity in my unfriended, yet resolute, career. Is it to consider the matter too curiously, to conceive that the laws of nature affect the mind? or that the spirit of man resembles an instrument, after all—an *Æolian* harp, which owes all its pulses to the gusts that pass across its strings,—simply depending upon the stronger or the feebler breeze; whether it shall ring with joyous and triumphant chords, or sink into throbs and sounds of sorrow?

The galloping of horses aroused me. It was

Guiscard with an escort. "What! not in your bed yet?" was his hurried salutation. "So much the better; you *will* have a showy despatch, to send to England to-morrow.—Clairfait has just outdone himself. He found the French retreating, and he followed them without loss of time. His troops had been so dispersed by the service of the day, that he could collect but fifteen hundred hussars; and with these he gallantly set forth, to pick up stragglers. His old acquaintance, Chazot, whom he had beaten the day before, was in command of a rearguard of ten thousand men. His fifteen hundred brave fellows were now exposed to ruin; and doubtless, if they had exhibited any symptom of retreating, they must have been ruined. But here Clairfait's *à la Turque* style was exactly in place. He ordered, that not a shot should be fired, but that the spur and sabre should do the business; and at once plunged into the mass of infantry, cavalry, and artillery.—In five minutes the whole were put to the rout; guns, baggage, and ammunition taken; and the French general-in-chief was as much stripped of his rear-guard as ever was peacock plucked of his tail."

"Will the duke follow up the blow?" was my inquiry.

"Beyond all doubt.—I have just left him, giving orders for the advance of the whole line at daybreak; and unless M. Dumourier is remarkably on the alert, we shall have him supping in camp, within the next twenty-four hours.—But you will have better intelligence from himself; for he bade me prepare you for

meeting him, as he rides to the wing, from which the march begins."

"Excellent news! You and Vornhorst will be field-m Marshals before the campaign is over." His countenance changed.

"No; my course unfortunately lies in a different direction. The duke has been so perplexed, by the delays continually forced upon him by the cabinets, that he has been more than once on the point of giving up the command. Clairfait's success, and the prospect of cutting off the retreat of the French, or of getting between them and Paris, have furnished him with new materials; and I am now on my way to Berlin, to put matters in the proper point of view. —Farewell, Marston, I am sorry to lose you as a comrade; but we *must* meet again;—though no laurels for *me* now. The duke must not find me here; he will pass by within the next few minutes. Farewell!"

The noble fellow sprang from his horse, and shook my hand with a fervour which I had not thought to be in his calm and lofty nature.

"Farewell!" he uttered once more, threw himself on the saddle, and was gone.

I had scarcely lost the sound of his horse's hoofs, as they rattled up the stony ravine of the hill; when the sound of a body of cavalry announced the approach of the generalissimo. He rode up, and addressed me with his usual courtesy. "I really am afraid, Mr. Marston, that you will think me in a conspiracy to prevent your enjoying a night's rest;

for all our meetings, I think, have been at the 'witching hour!' But, would you think it too much, to mount your horse, and ride with me, before you send your despatches to your cabinet?—I must visit the troops of the left wing without delay; we can converse on the way."

I was all obedience—"a knight of Prussia; and therefore at his highness's service."

"Well, well, I thought so. You English gentlemen are ready for every thing.—In the mean time, while your horse is saddling, look over this letter.—That was a gallant attempt of Clairfait's, and, if we had not been too far off to support him, we might have pounced upon the main body, as effectually as he did upon the rear.—Chazot has escaped, but one of M. Dumourier's aides-de-camp, a remarkably intelligent fellow, has been taken, and on him has been found the paper, which I beg you to peruse."

It was a letter from the commander-in-chief for the *Bureau de la Guerre* in Paris.

"MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,—I write this, after having been on horseback for eighteen hours. We must have reinforcements without a moment's delay, or we are lost—the honour of France is lost—France herself is lost. I have with me less than 20,000 men to defend the road to Paris against 100,000. The truth must be told—truth becomes a citizen. We have been beaten! I have been unable to hold the passes of Argonne, and the enemy's hussars are already scouring the country in my rear. I have sent order upon order to Kellerman, and all his answer is, that he is preparing to advance; but he has

not stirred a step.—I dare say, that he is playing at trictrac at Mentz this moment.” The letter then gave details.

“My march from the Argonne has been a bold manœuvre, but it has cost us something. Chazot, to whom I entrusted the protection of the march, and to whom I had given the strictest orders to keep the enemy’s light troops at a distance; has suffered himself to be entrapped by those experienced campaigners, and has lost men.—Duval fought bravely at the head of his brigade, and Miranda narrowly escaped being taken, in a dashing attempt to save the park of artillery. He had a horse killed under him, and was carried from the field. Macdonald, who takes this, will explain more. He is a promising officer—give him a step. In the mean time, send me every man that you can. *France is in danger.*”

“The object now,” observed the duke, “will be, to press upon the enemy, in his present state of disorder, until we shall either be enabled to force him to fight a pitched battle at a disadvantage, or strike in between him and the capital.—And now forward!”

I mounted, and we rode through the camp—the duke occasionally giving some order for the morning to the officers commanding the successive divisions, and conversing with me on the points in discussion between England and the Allies. He was evidently dissatisfied with continental politics.

“The king and the emperor are both sincere; but that is more than I can always say for those about them. We have too many Italians, and even

Frenchmen, at our German courts. They are republicans to a man; and in consequence, every important measure is betrayed.—I can perceive in the manœuvring of the enemy's general, that he must have been acquainted with my last despatch from Berlin; and, I am so thoroughly persuaded of the fact, that I mean to manœuvre, to-morrow, on that conviction.—The order from Berlin is, that I shall act upon his flanks. Well then—within two hours after daylight, I shall make a push for his centre; and, breaking through that, shall separate his wings, and crush them at my leisure. One would think," said he, pausing, and looking round him with the exultation of conscious power, "that the troops had overheard us, and already anticipated a victory."

The sight from the knoll, where we drew our bridles, was certainly of the most striking kind. The fires, which at first I had seen glittering only on the mountain tops, were now blazing in all quarters; in the cleared spaces of the forest, on the heaths and in the ravines: the heaps of faggots gathered for the winter consumption of the cities, by the woodmen of the province, were put in requisition, and the axes of the pioneers added many a huge larch and ancient elm to the blaze. Soldiers seldom think much of those who are to come after them; and the flames shot up among the thickets with the most unsparing brilliancy. Cheerfulness, too, prevailed; the sounds of laughter, and gay voices, and songs, arose on every side.

The well-preserved game of this huge hunting-ground, the old vexation of the French peasant, now

fell into hands which had no fear of the galleys for a shot at a wild boar, or bringing down a partridge. The fires exhibited many a substantial specimen of forest luxury, in the act of preparation. No man enjoys rest and food, like the soldier. A day's fighting and fasting gives a sense of delight to both, such as the man of cities can scarcely conceive. No epicure at his most *recherché* board, ever knew the true pleasure of the senses, equal to the campaigner stretched upon the grass, until his supper is ready, and then sitting down to it. I acknowledge, that to me, the simple rest, and the simple meal, often gave a sense of enjoyment, which I have never felt in the luxuries of higher life. The instantaneous sleep that followed; the night without a restless moment; the awaking, with all my powers refreshed, and yet with as complete an unconsciousness of the hours past away, as if I had lain down but the moment before, and started from night into sunshine—all belong to the campaigner: he has his troubles like other men; but his enjoyments are his own, exclusive, delicious, incomparable.

An officer of the staff now rode up, to make a report on some movement of the division intended to lead in the morning, and the duke gave me permission to retire. He galloped off in the direction of the column, and I slowly pursued my way to my quarters. Yet, I could not resist many a halt, to gaze on the singular beauty of the bursts of flame which lighted the landscape. More than once they reminded me of the famous Homeric description, of the Trojan bivouac, by the ships. All the images were the

same, except that, for the sea, we had the endless meadows of Champagne, and, for the ships, the tents of the enemy. — We had the fires, the exulting troops, the carouse, the picketed horses, the shouts and songs, the lustre of the autumnal sky, and the bold longings for victory, and the dawn. Even in Pope's feeble translation, the scene is animated—

“ The troops exulting sate in order round,
And beaming fires illumined all the ground.”

Then follows the famous simile, of the moon suddenly throwing its radiance over the obscure features of the landscape.

But Homer, the poet of realities, soon returns to the true material of the warrior scene,

“ So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays,
A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild,
And shoot a shadowy lustre o'er the field.
Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
Whose umber'd arms by fits thick flashes send ;
Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps of corn,
And ardent warriors wait the rising morn.”

CHAPTER XIX.

“ If aught against thy life,
Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
Against the law of nature, law of nations.
No more thy country ; but an impious crew
Of men conspiring to uphold their state
By worse than hostile deeds ; violating the ends,
For which our country is a name so dear.”

MILTON.

I LEAVE it to others to give the history of this campaign, one of the most memorable of Europe from its consequences. The tramp of that army roused the slumbering giant of France. If the Frenchman said of a battle, that it was like a ball-room, “you see little beyond your opposite partner ;” he might have said of a campaign, that you scarcely see even so much. The largeness of the scale is beyond all personal observation. I can answer only for myself, that I was on horseback before daybreak, and marched in the midst of columns which had no more doubt of beating up the enemy’s quarters, than they had of eating their first meal. All were in the highest spirits ; and the opinions of the staff, among whom

the duke had assigned me a place, were so sanguine, that I felt some concern at their reaching the ear of the captive aide-de-camp. This induced me to draw him away gradually from the crowd. I found him lively, as his countrymen generally are, but exhibiting at once a strength of observation and a frankness of language, more uncommon.

"I admit," said he, "that you have beaten us; but this is the natural effect of your incomparable discipline. Our army is new, our general new, every thing new; but our imprudence, in venturing to meet your 100,000 with our 25,000.—Yet France is not beaten. In fact, you have not met the French, up to this hour."

"What!" I exclaimed in surprise; "of what nation are the troops which we have fought in the Argonne, and are now following on the high-road to Paris? The Duke of Brunswick will be amused, by hearing that he has been wasting his cannon-shot on spectres."

"Ah, you English," he replied with a broad laugh, which made me still more doubt his nation, "are such matter-of-fact people, that you require substance in every thing.—But, what are the troops of France? Brave fellows enough, but not one of them has ever seen a shot fired in his life; even the few battalions which we had in America saw nothing but hedge-firing. The men before you have never seen more service than they could find in a cabaret quarrel, or in hunting a highwayman. Some of them, I admit, have served their king in the shape of shouldering their muskets at his palace gates in Versailles, or marching in a procession of cardinals and confessors

to Nôtre-Dame. My astonishment is, that at the first shot they did not all run to their soup, and at the second leave their muskets to take care of themselves. But they are brave ; and, if they once learn to fight, the pupils may beat the master."

"You are a philosopher, Monsieur, but, I hope, no prophet. I think I observe in you something of our English blood after all.—You have opinions, and you speak them."

"Not quite English, nor yet quite French. My father was a Briton, but a borderer ; so not even exactly either English or Scotch. He took up arms for the son of James—of course was ruined, as every one was, who had to do with a Stuart, from the beginning of time—luckily escaped, after the crash of Culloden, entered the Scottish Brigade here, and left me nothing but his memory, his sword, and the untarnished name of Macdonald." I bowed to a name so connected with honour ; and the lively aide-de-camp and I became, from that moment, fast friends. After a long and fatiguing march, in one of the most sultry days of the year, our advanced guard reached the front of the enemy's position. The outposts were driven in at once ; and the whole army, as it came up, was formed in order of battle. Rumours had been spread, of large reinforcements being on their way to the enemy ; and the clouds of dust which rose along the plain, and the growing sound of baggage waggons and heavy guns behind the hills, rendered it probable. Still, the country before us was clear, and our force moved slowly forward to storm an extensive range of heights, in the shape of a half-

moon, which commanded the field. This was one of the sights, which nothing but war can furnish, and to which no other sight on earth is equal. The masses, the shouts, the rapidity of the movements—the galloping of the cavalry—the rolling of the parks of artillery—the rush of the light troops—the pressing march of the battalions—and all glittering with all the pomps of waving standards, flashing sabres, and columns of bayonets, that looked like sheets of steel. The aide-de-camp evidently enjoyed the sight, as much as myself, and gave way to that instinct, by which man is a wolf, let the wise say what they will, and exults in war. But, when he heard shots fired from the range of hills, his countenance changed.

“There must be some mistake here,” he said, with sudden gravity. “Dumourier could never have intended to hold his position so far in advance, and so wholly unprotected.—Those troops will be lost, and the whole campaign may be compromised.”

The attack now commenced along the line, and the resistance was evidently serious. A heavy fire was sustained for some time ; but the troops gradually established themselves on the lower part of the range. “I know it all now !” exclaimed my agitated companion, after a long look through my glass : “it is Kellerman’s corps, which ought to have been a league to the rear of its present position at this moment. He must have received counter orders since I left him, or been desperately deceived ; another half hour there, and he will never leave those hills, but a pri-

soner or a corpse." From the shaking of his bridle, and the nervous quivering of his manly countenance, I saw how eagerly he would have received permission to bring the French general out of his dilemma. But he was a man of honour, and I was sure of him. In the midst of a thunder of cannon, which seemed to shake the ground under our feet, the firing suddenly ceased on the enemy's side. The cessation was followed on ours; there was an extraordinary silence over the field, and probably the generalissimo expected a flag of truce, or some proposal for the capitulation of the enemy's corps. But none came; and after a pause, in which aides-de-camp and orderlies were continually galloping between the advance and the spot where the duke stood at the head of his staff, the line moved on again, and the hill was in our possession. But Kellerman was gone; and before our light troops could make any impression on the squadrons which covered the movement, he had again taken up a position on that formidable ground, which was destined to figure so memorably in the annals of French soldiership, the heights of Valmy.

"What think you now, my friend?" was my question.

"Just what I thought before," was the answer. "We want science, without which bravery *may* fail; but we have bravery, without which science *must* fail. —Kellerman may have deceived himself in his first position, but he has evidently retrieved his error. He has now shortened his distance from his reinforcements, and has secured one of the strongest positions

in the country. You may drive him out of it before nightfall; but you might as well storm Ehrenbreitstein, or your own Gibraltar, by morning."

"Well; the experiment is about to be made, for my glass shows me our howitzers *en masse*, moving up to salute him with grape and canister. He will have an uneasy bivouac of it: what say you?"

Whether Kellerman can manœuvre, I do not know; but that he will fight, I am perfectly sure. He is old, but one of the steadiest officers in our service.—If it is in his orders to maintain those heights, he will hold them, to his last cartridge and his last man."

Our conversation was now lost in the roar of artillery; and after a tremendous fire of an hour on the French position, which was answered with equal weight from the heights, a strong division was sent to assail the principal battery. The attempt was gallantly made, and the success seemed infallible; when I heard, through all the roar, the exclamation of Macdonald, "Brave Steingell!" At the words, he pointed to a heavy column of infantry, hurrying down the ravine, in rear of the redoubt.

"Those are from the camp," he exclaimed, "and a few thousands more will make the post impregnable."

The sight of the column seemed to have given renewed vigour to both sides; for, while the French guns rapidly increased their fire, aided by the musketry of the newly arrived troops; the Prussian artillerists, then the first in Europe, threw their shot in such showers, that the forest, which had hitherto largely screened the enemy, began to fall in masses; branch and trunk were swept away, and the ground

became as naked of cover, as if it had been stripped by the axe. The troops thus exposed could not withstand this "iron hail," and they were palpably staggered. At length, the retreat of a brigade, after suffering immense loss, shook the whole line, and produced a charge of our dragoons up the hill. I gave an involuntary glance at Macdonald. He was pale and exhausted; but in another moment his eye sparkled, his colour came, and I heard him, almost unconsciously, exclaim, "Bravo, Chazot! All is not lost yet." I saw a group of mounted officers galloping into the very spot which had been abandoned by the brigade, and followed by the colours of three or four battalions, which were planted directly under our fire. "There comes Chazot with his division!" cried the aide-de-camp; "gallant fellow, let him now make up for his ill fortune! Monsieur Brunswick will not sleep on the hill of Valmy to-night. He has been unable to force the centre; and now both flanks are secured: another attack would cost him ten thousand men.—Nor will Monsieur Brunswick sleep on the hills of Valmy to-morrow. Dumourier was right; there was his Thermopylæ. But it will not be stormed. *Vive la France!*"

The prediction was nearly true. The unexpected reinforcements, and the approach of night, determined the generalissimo to abandon the assault, for the time. The fire soon slackened, the troops were withdrawn, and, after a heavy loss on both sides, both slept upon the field.

I was roused at midnight from the deep sleep of fatigue, by an order to attend the duke; who was

then holding a council. Vornhorst was my summoner, and on our way he slightly explained the purpose of his mission. "We are all in rather bad spirits, at the result of to-day's action. The affair itself was not much, as it was only one of detachments, but it shows two things:—that the French are true to their revolutionary nonsense; and that they can fight. On even ground we have beaten them, and shall beat them again; but if Champagne gives them cover, what will it be, when we get into the broken country that lies between us, and Paris? Still, there has been no rising of the people, and until then, we have nothing to fear for the event of the campaign."

"What then have you to fear?" was my question. "What calls the council to-night?"

"My good friend," said Vornhorst, with a grave smile, which more reminded me of Guiscard, "remember the Arab apologue,—that every man is born with two strings tied to him, one large and visible, but made of twisted feathers; the other so fine as to be invisible, but made of twisted steel. Thus, there are few men without a visible motive, which all can see; and an invisible one, which, however, pulls them just as the puller pleases.—Berlin pulls now, and the duke's glory and the good of Europe will be sacrificed to policy."

"But will the king suffer this? Will the emperor stand by, and see this done?"

"They are both zealous for the liberation of the unfortunate royal family. But, *entre nous*—and this is a secret which I scarcely dare whisper even in a

French desert—their councillors have other ideas.—Poland is the prize to which the ministers of both courts look. They know, that the permanent possession of French provinces is impossible.—It would be against the will of your great country, against the deepest request of the French king, and against their own declarations. But, Polish seizures would give them provinces, to which nobody has laid claim, and which nobody can envy. The consequence is, that a negotiation is on foot, at this hour, to conclude the war by treaty, and, having ensured the safety of the royal family, to withdraw the army into Lorraine.”

“Why then am I summoned?”

“To put your signature to the preliminaries.”

I started with indignation. “They shall wait long, if they wait till I sign them.—I shall not attend this council.”

“Observe,” said Vornhorst, “I have spoken only on conjecture. If I return without you, my candour will be rewarded by an instant sentence for Spandau.”

This decided me. I shook my gallant friend by the hand; the cloud passed from his brow, and we rode together to the council. It was of a more formal nature than I had yet witnessed. Two officers expressly sent from Vienna and Berlin, military envoys, had brought the decisions of their respective cabinets upon the crisis. The duke said little. He had lost his gay nonchalance of manner, and was palpably dispirited and disappointed. His address to me was as gracious as ever; but it was

more of the diplomatist, and less of the soldier. Our sitting closed with a resolution, to agree upon an armistice, and to make the immediate release of the royal family one of the stipulations. I placed, in the strongest light that I could, the immense impulse which any pause in our advance must give to the revolutionary spirit in France. I was overruled. The proposal for the armistice was signed by all present but one—that one myself. And as we broke up silently and sullenly, at the first glimpse of a cold and stormy dawn, the fit omen of our future fate, I saw a secretary of the duke, accompanied by Macdonald, sent off to the headquarters of the enemy.

All was now over, and I thought only of returning to my post at Paris. I spent the rest of the day in paying parting civilities to my gallant friends, and ordered my *calèche* to be in readiness by morning. But my prediction had been only too true, though I had not calculated on so rapid a fulfilment. The armistice was regarded as a national triumph. By the electric change of public opinion, in this most electric of all countries, every man in France was a soldier, and every soldier a hero. This was the miracle of twenty-four hours. Dumourier's force instantly swelled to 100,000 men. He might have had a million, if he had asked for them. The whole country became suddenly impassable. Every village poured out its company of armed peasants; and, notwithstanding the diplomatic cessation of hostilities, a real, universal, and desperate peasant war broke upon us on every side.

After a week of this most harassing warfare, in which we lost ten times the number of men, which it would have cost, to march over the bodies of Dumourier's army to the capital; the order was issued for a general retreat to the frontier. I remembered Mordecai's letter; but it was now too late. Even if I could have turned my horse's head to a French port, I felt myself bound to share the fortunes of the gallant army to which I had been so closely attached. In the heat of youth, I went even further; and, as my mission had virtually ceased, and I wore a Prussian order, I took the *undiplomatic* step, of proposing to act as one of the duke's aides-de-camp, until the army had left the enemy's territory. Behold me now, a hulan of the duke's guard!

I found no reason to repent my choice, though our service was remarkably severe. The peasant war was chiefly against the light troops and irregulars of the retreating army—the columns being too formidable to admit of attack, by the multitude. Forty thousand men, of the main army of France, were appointed to the duty of “seeing us out of the country.” But, every attempt at foraging, every movement beyond the range of our cannon, was instantly met by a peasant skirmish. Every village exhibited a barricade, from which we were fired on; every forest produced a succession of sharp encounters; and the passage of every river required as much precaution, as if we were at open war. Thus we were perpetually on the wing, and our personal escapes were often of the most hair-breadth

kind. If we passed through a thicket, we were sure to be met by a discharge of bullets; if we dismounted from our horses to take our hurried and scanty meal, we found some of them shot at the inn-door; if we flung ourselves, tired as hounds after a chase, on the straw of a village stable, the probability was, that we were awakened by finding the thatch in a blaze. How often we envied the easier life of the battalions! But there, an enemy, more fearful than the peasantry, began to show itself. The weather had changed to storms of rain and bitter wind; the plains of Champagne, never famed for fertility, were now as wild and bare as a Russian steppe. The worst provisions, supplied on the narrowest scale—above all, disgust, the most fatal canker of the soldier's soul—spread disease among the ranks; and the roads on which we followed the march, gave terrible evidence of the havoc. The mortality at last became so great, that it seemed not unlikely that the whole army would thus melt away, before it reached the boundary of this land of death.

The horror of the scene even struck the enemy; and whether through fear of the contagion, or through the uselessness of hunting down men who were treading to the grave by thousands, the peasantry ceased to follow us. Yet such was the wretchedness of that hideous progress, that this cessation of hostility was scarcely a relief. The animation of the skirmishes, though it often cost life, yet kept the rest more alive; the stratagem, the adventure, the surprise, nay, even the defeat, relieved us from the dreadful

monotony of the half-existence, to which we were now condemned. Our buoyant and brilliant career was at an end ; the light troops were now only the mutes and mourners of a funeral procession of 70,000 men.

I still look back with an indescribable shudder, at the scenes which we were compelled to witness from day to day during that month of misery ; for the march, which began in the first days of October, was protracted till its end. I had kept up my spirits, when many a more vigorous frame had sunk, and many a maturer mind had desponded ; but the perpetual recurrence of the same dreary spectacles ; the dying, and the more fortunate dead, covering the highways, the fields, and the village streets ; at length sank into my soul. Some recollections of earlier principles, and the memory of my old friend Vincent, prevented my taking the summary and unhappy means of ridding myself of my burden, which I saw daily resorted to among the soldiery—a bullet through the brain, or a bayonet through the heart, cured all. But, thanks to early impressions, I was determined to wait the hand of the enemy, or the course of nature. Many a night I lay down beside my starving charger, with something of a hope, that I should never see another morning ; and many a morning, when I dragged my feeble limbs from the cold and wet ground, I looked round the horizon for the approach of some enemy's squadron, or peasant band, which might give me an honourable chance of escape from an existence now no longer endurable. But all was in vain. For leagues round, no living

object was visible, except that long column, silently and slowly winding on through the distance, like an army of spectres.

My diminished squadron had at length become almost the only rear-guard. From a hundred and fifty as fine fellows as ever sat a charger, we were now reduced to a third. All its officers, youths of the first families of Prussia, had either been left behind, dying in the villages, or had been laid in their graves by the road-side, and I was now the only commandant. Perhaps even this circumstance was the means of saving my life. My new responsibility compelled me to make some exertion; and I felt that, live or die, I might still earn an honourable name. Even in those darkest hours, the thought, that Clotilde might ask where and how I finished my ill-fortuned career; or that she gave a moment's sorrow to one who remembered her to the last; had its share in restoring me to the world. In that fond frenzy, which seems so fantastic, when it is past, but which is so natural, and actually so irresistible, while it is in the mind; I wrote down my feelings, wild as they were—my impossible hopes, my inextinguishable affection, my dying devotement to her image; finishing with a promise, to watch over her; if there could be an intercourse between the living and the dead, in that world to which I felt myself hastening.—Placing the paper in my bosom, with a locket containing a ringlet of her beautiful hair, which Mariamne had contrived to obtain for me; I felt as if I had done my last duty among mankind.

Still, we wandered on, through a country which

had the look of a boundless cemetery. Not a peasant was now to be met; not a sound of human labour, of joy or sorrow, reached the ear; not a smoke rose from mansion or cottage; all was still, except when the wind burst in bitter gusts over the plain, or the almost ceaseless rain swelled into sheets, and sent the rivers roaring down before us. If the land had never been inhabited, or had been swept of its inhabitants by an avenging Providence, it could not have been more solitary. I never conceived the idea of the wilderness before. It was the intensity of desolation.

We seemed even to make no progress. We all began to think, that the scene would never change. But, one evening, when the troop had lain down under the shelter of a knoll, my sergeant, a fine Hungarian, whose eyes had been sharpened by hussar service on the Turkish border, roused me, saying that he had discovered French horse-tracks in advance of us. We were all quickly on the alert; the horse-tracks were found to be numerous, and it was evident, that a strong body of the enemy's cavalry had managed to get in between us and the army. It is true, that there was a treaty, in which its unmolested movement was an article. But, it might have been annulled; or the French general might have been inclined to make a daring experiment on our worn-down battalions.—We were on horseback immediately. The track led us along the high-road for one or two leagues, and then turned off towards a village on a height at some distance. We now paused, and the question was, whether to follow the

enemy, or to rest ourselves, and our tired horses, for the night. But, we had scarcely come to the decision of unloosing girths, when the sky above the village showed a sudden glow; and a confused clamour of voices came upon the wind. Dispatching an orderly to the duke, to inform him of the French movement, we now rode towards the village. We found the road in its immediate neighbourhood covered with fugitives; who, however, instead of flying from us, with the usual horror of the peasantry, hung on our bridles, and implored us with every wild gesticulation, to hasten to the gates. All that I could learn from the outcries of men, women, and children, was, that their village, or rather town—for we found it of considerable size—had been the quarters of some of the Austrian cavalry, and that the officers had given a ball, to which the leading families had been invited. The ball was charged as a national crime by the democrats in Paris, and a regiment of horse had been sent to punish those unfortunate people.

To attack such a force with fifty worn-out men, was obviously hopeless; and my hulans, brave as they were, hung down their heads; but a fresh course came rushing from the gates with even louder outcries than before, and the words, *massacre* and *conflagration*, were in the mouths of all. While I pondered for a moment on our want of means, a fine old man, with his white hair stained with blood from a sabre wound in his forehead, clung to my charger's neck, and implored me, by the honour of soldiership, to make but one effort against the revolutionary

brigands, as he termed them. "I am a French officer and a noble!" he exclaimed—"I have served my king, I have a son in the army of Condé, and now the wretches have seized on my only daughter, my Amalie, and they are carrying her to their accursed guillotine."

I could resist no longer; yet I looked round despairingly at my force. "Follow me," said the agonized old man; "one half of the villains are drunk in the *cafés* already, the other half are busy in that horrid procession to the axe. I shall take you by a private way, and you may fall upon them by surprise.—You shall find me, and all who belong to me, sword in hand by your side.—Come on; and the God of battles, and protector of the unhappy, will give you victory." He knelt at my feet, with his hands upraised.—"For my child's sake!"—he continued faintly to exclaim—"for my innocent child's sake!" I saw tears fall down some of our bronzed faces, and I had but one word to utter; but that was—"Forward!" We followed our guide swiftly and silently through the narrow streets; and then suddenly emerging into the public square, saw such a sight of public terror, as never before met my eyes.

The market-place was lighted up, and filled with dragoons. Leaving my hulans under cover of a dark street, and riding forward to reconnoitre, I saw, with astonishment, the utter carelessness with which they abandoned themselves to their indulgences, in the midst of an irritated population. Some were drinking on horseback; some had thrown themselves on

the benches of the market-place, and were evidently intoxicated. The people stood at the corners of the streets, looking on, palpably in terror, yet as palpably indignant at the outrage of the military. From the blaze in some of the windows, and the shrieks of females, I could perceive that plunder was going on. Yet, a strong body of cavalry, mounted in the middle of the square, and keeping guard round a waggon on which a guillotine had been already erected, still made me think an attack hopeless. I now saw a rush of the people from one of the side streets; a couple of dragoon helmets were visible above the crowd; and three or four carts followed, filled with young females in white robes and flowers, as if dressed for a ball. I felt my horse's bridle pulled, and saw the old noble. "Now or never!" he cried, in a voice almost choked with emotion. "Those are for the guillotine—barbarians! brigands!—they will murder my Amalie." He sank before me. "What! is this an execution?" I exclaimed. His answer was scarcely above a whisper, for he seemed fainting. "The villains have been sent," said he, "to burn the town; they have seized the children of our best families, compelled them to dress as they were dressed for the Prussian ball, and are now about to murder them by their accursed guillotine." Pointing to one lovely girl, who, pale as a spectre, stood in the foremost of those vehicles of death, he exclaimed, "Amalie! O, my Amalie!"

The cart was already within a few feet of the scaffold, when I gave the word to my troopers. The brave fellows answered my "Forward!" with a shout,

charged sabre in hand, and in an instant had thrown themselves between the victims and the guillotine. Their escort, taken completely by surprise, was broken at the first shock ; we dashed without loss of time on the squadrons scattered round the market, and swept it clear of them. Our success was complete. The regiment, intoxicated, and unacquainted with our force—which they probably thought to be the advance of the whole Prussian cavalry—after having lost many men, for the peasantry showed no mercy on the dismounted, turned at full gallop into the open country. The towns-people now performed their part. The victims were hurried away by their families, in lamentations and rejoicings, tears and kisses. The old noble's daughter, half dead, was carried off in her father's arms, with a thousand benedictions on me. The guillotine was hewn down with a hundred axes, and the fragments burned in the square. Its waggon was made to serve as a portion of a barricade ; and with every vehicle, which could be rolled out, the entrance to the street was fortified ; with the national rapidity, in any deed, good or ill, under the stars.

After having appeased our hunger, and that of our famishing horses, and being offered all the purses, which the French dragoons had left them ; we finished the exploit by a general cheer in honour of the ladies, and marched on our route, followed by the prayers of the whole community. Thus ended the only productive skirmish of the retreat. But, it fed us, broke the monotony of the march, and gave us something to talk of—and the soldier asks but little more. A

gallant action had certainly been done ; not the less gallant for its being a humane one ; and even my bold hulans gave me credit for being a “smart officer,” a title of no slight value in their dashing service.

Yet what, as the poet Saadi says, is fortune, “but a peacock, a showy tail on a frightful pair of legs?” Our triumph was to be suddenly followed by a reverse. The burgundy and champagne of the old count’s cellar had made us festive, and our voices were heard along the road, with a gaiety imprudent in a hostile land. The sound of a trumpet in our front brought us to our senses, and a dead stand. But we were in a vein of heroism, and instead of taking to our old hussar habits, and slipping round the enemy’s flanks ; we determined to cut our way through them, if they had the whole cavalry of France for their *appui*. The word was given, and the spur carried us through a strong line of cavalry posted across the road. But the moon had just risen, enough to show us a still stronger line a few hundred yards beyond, which it would be folly to touch. There was now no resource, but to return as we went, which we did at full speed, and again crushed our antagonists. But, there again we saw squadron after squadron blocking up the road. All was now desperate. Yet, Frederick’s law of arms was well known—“the officer of cavalry who *waits to be charged*, must be broke.” We made a plunge at our living circumvallation ; but the French dragoons had now learned common sense—they opened for us ; and when we were once fairly in, enveloped us completely ; it was then a troop to a brigade ;

fifty jaded men and horses, to fifteen hundred, fresh from camp. What happened further I know not. I saw, for a minute or two, a great deal of pistol-firing and a great deal of sabre clashing; I felt my horse stagger under me, at the moment when I aimed a blow at a gigantic cuirassier; a pistol exploded close to my ear, as I was going down; and I heard no more.

CHAPTER XX.

“O, Nation miserable!

When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne,
By his own interdiction stands accursed,
And doth blaspheme his breed? Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king.—

Fare thee well!

Those evils thou repeat'st upon thyself,
Have banished me.”

SHAKSPEARE.

ON opening my eyes again, I found the scene strangely altered. I was lying in a little chamber furnished with Parisian elegance—a sufficient contrast to a sky dark as pitch, or only illumined by carbines, and the sparkles of sabres delving at each other.—I was lying on an embroidered sofa; an equally strong contrast to my position, among the bodies of fallen men and the heels of plunging horses. A showy Turkish cloak, or *robe de chambre*, had superseded my tarnished jacket. I was completely altered as a warrior; and, from the glance which I cast on a mirror, surrounded with gilded nymphs and swains enough to have furnished a ballet; I saw in

my haggard countenance, and a wound across my forehead, which a riband but half concealed, that I was not less altered as a man.

All round me looked so perfectly like the scenes, with which I had been familiar in my romance-reading days; that, bruised and feeble as I was, I almost expected to find my pillow attended by some of those slight figures in long white drapery, with blue eyes, and ivory fingers, which of old ministered to so many ill-used knights and wayworn pilgrims. But my reveries were broken by a sharp voice in the outer chamber, insisting on an entrance into mine, and replied to by a weak and garrulous female one, refusing the admission. The dialogue was something of this order—

“Strong or weak, well or ill, able or not able, I must send him, before twelve o’clock to-night, to Paris.”

“But, the poor gentleman’s wounds are still unhealed.”

“Still, he must set out. The ‘*malle poste*’ will be at the door; and, if he had fifty wounds on him, he must go. The marquis is halfway to Paris by this time; perhaps more than halfway to the guillotine.”

This was followed by a burst of sobs from the female; whom I discovered, by her sorrowing confessions, to have been a nurse in the family.

“Well,” was the ruffian’s reply; “women of all ages are fools: what is it to you whether this young fellow is shot, or hanged? He was taken in arms against the Republic, one and indivisible. All the enemies of France must perish! That is the decree.”

The old woman now partially opened the door, to see whether I slept; and I closed my eyes, for the purpose of hearing all that was to be heard, without interruption. The speaker, whom I alternately took for the *gendarme* of the district, and the executioner, gave vent to his swelling soul, in the national style.

“*Ventre, Saint Gris.* I am an ill-used man. What! leave *me!* leave Jean Jacques Louis Gilet, in charge of this wretched aristocrat! while I should be marching with my battalion, and at its head too, if merit met its reward; to sweep the foes of the Republic from the face of the earth.—No; I shall not remain in this paltry place, a village functionary, when I ought to be on the highest bench of justice.—Am I to be playing the part of arresting aristocrats, when I might be commandant of a brigade, and marching over the bodies of the crowned tyrants of the earth to glory!”

As his harangue glowed, his pace quickened, and his voice grew more vehement; until, probably impatient of the time which lay between him and the first offices of the Republic, he overpowered the resistance of the nurse, and burst into the chamber. Throwing himself into a theatrical attitude before a mirror—for what Frenchman ever passes one without a glance of happy recognition?—“Rise, aristocrat!” he cried, in the tone of Talma, in “*Brutus*,” calling up the shade of Cæsar. “Rise, and account to the world for your crimes against the liberty of man!”

I looked with such surprise on this champion of the sons of Adam—a little meagre creature, who seemed to be shaped on the model of one of his own pens, stripped, withered, and ink-dried; that I actually

burst into laughter. His indignation rose, and pulling out a pistol with one hand, and a roll of paper from his bosom with the other, he presented them together. I perceived, as I lay on my pillow, that the pistol was without a lock, and thus was comforted; but the paper was of a more formidable description. It was the famous decree of "Fraternization," by which France declared "that she would grant succour to every people who wished to recover their liberty," and commanded her generals "to aid all such, and to defend all citizens who might be troubled in the cause of freedom."

This paper indeed startled me; for it was the consummation which I had dreaded so long. I saw at once, that France, in those wild words, had declared war against every throne in Europe; and that we were now beginning the era of struggle and suffering which Mordecai's strong sense had predicted, and of which no human sagacity could foresee the end. My countenance probably showed the impression which this European anathema had made upon me; for Monsieur Gilet became more heroic than ever; throwing aside his pistol, which he had at length discovered to be *hors de combat*, and drawing the falchion which clattered at his heels, and was nearly as long as himself, he flourished it in quick march backward and forward before the mirror—that mirror never forgotten!—and in all the whirlwind of his rage, panted for the conquest of "perfidious Albion," the "traitor" Pitt, and the whole brood of hoary power. I was too feeble to turn him out of the room, and too contemptuous to reply. But his overthrow was not

the further off. The old nurse, who, old as she was, still retained some of the sinews and all the irritability of a stout Champenoise peasant, roused by his insults to the aristocracy ; one of whom she probably regarded herself, from having lived so long under their roof ; watched her opportunity, made a spring at him like a wild-cat, wrested the sabre from his hand, and, grasping the struggling and screaming little functionary in her strong arms, carried him like a child out of the room.

She then returned, and having locked the door to prevent a second inroad, sat down by my couch ; and, with the usual passion of women after strong excitement, burst into exclamations and tears. What I could collect from her broken narrative, was little more than the commonplace of national misery, in that fearful time. She had been a servant in the family of the noble whose daughter I had saved from death. She had been the nurse of the young countess ; and all the blessings that sorrow and gratitude ever gathered together, could not be exceeded by the praises which she poured upon my head. On its being rumoured in the town, that I was attacked and killed by a body of cavalry sent to revenge their comrades ; the Marquis Lanfranc—I now first learned the name of my entertainer—had gone to look for my remains in the field. I was found still breathing ; and, to avoid further danger, was carried to this dwelling, a hunting-lodge in the heart of the forest. But the marquis's humanity had brought evil on himself. His visits to the lodge had been remarked, and on this very morning he had been arrested, and

conveyed, with his daughter, in a carriage escorted by *gendarmes* to the capital. My detection followed, of course; the papers found on my person proved that I was an agent of England; and the officious M. Gilet had spent the morning, in exhibiting to the neighbourhood the order of the "Committee of Public Safety," a name which froze the blood; to conduct me forthwith to their tribunal. I tell all this in my own way; for the dame's mixtures of sighs, sobs, and vehement indignation, would have defied all record.

My prospect was now black enough, for justice was a word unheard-of in the present condition of things; and my being an Englishman, and in the civil service of my country, would have been a death-warrant. I must acknowledge, too, that I had fairly thrown away all chance, by my adoption of the Prussian sabre. Yet, even in that moment; and let me give myself credit for the recollection, my first enquiry was, for the fate of my squadron. The old woman could tell me but little on the subject; but that little was consolatory. The French troopers, who had come back triumphing into the town, had not brought any Prussian prisoners: two or three foreigners, who had lost their horses, were sheltered in her master's stables, until they could make their escape; and even of them she had heard no more. The truth is, that nothing is more difficult in war than to catch a hussar, who understands his business; and the probability was, that the chief part of them had slipped away, leaving the French to sabre each other in the dark. The fall of my horse alone had

brought me down, otherwise I might have escaped, and been at that hour caracoling in Berlin.

Monsieur Gilet, with some of the civic authorities, paid me a second visit in the evening, to prepare me for my journey. To me it was become indifferent whether I died in the carriage, or by the edge of the guillotine; the journey was short in either case, and the shorter and sooner the better. I answered none of their interrogatories; told them I was at their disposal; directed the old woman to remember me to her master and mistress, if she ever should see them in this world; shook her strong old hand, and bade God bless her. In return, she kissed me on both cheeks, whispered a thousand benedictions, and left the room violently sobbing; yet with a parting glance at Monsieur Gilet and his *collaborateurs*, so mingled of wrath and ridicule, that it was beyond all my deciphering.

“Time and the hour run through the roughest day,”

says the great poet; and, with the coming of midnight, a *chaise de poste* drew up at the door. As I was a prisoner of importance, M. Gilet was not suffered to take all the honour of my introduction to the axe on himself; and the mayor and deputy-mayor of the district insisted on this opportunity of making themselves known to the heads of the Republic. They mounted on the box in front, a couple of gendarmes sat behind, M. Gilet took his seat by my side, and, with an infinite cracking of whips, we moved out upon the causeway.

I soon discovered, that my companion was by no

means satisfied with 'existing circumstances.' The officiousness of the pair of mayors prodigiously displeased him. He broke forth—

"See these two beggars," he exclaimed, "pretending to patriotism! They have no energy, no courage, no civism—why, *you* might have remained for a twelvemonth under their very nostrils, before they would have found you out. Gilet is the man for the service of his country." Merely to stop the torrent of his complainings, I asked him some vague questions relative to the noble, whom I was now following to Paris.

"Hah! Citizen Lanfranc. All is over with him. He once held his head high enough, but it will soon be as low as ever it was high—yet I could have forgiven his aristocracy, if he had not put these two 'chiens' above me."

The position in which the mayor and his deputy sat, on the box of the chaise; continually presenting them to the eye of my companion, kept his choler peculiarly active.

"One of these fellows," he exclaimed, "was the Marquis's cook, another his perruquier!—but, *I* was his tailor. Every man of talent knows the superiority of *my* profession;—for what is the first of nobles without elegance of costume, or what indeed would man himself be, without my art, the noblest and the earliest art of mankind?—and yet he made these two 'brigands' mayor and deputy—*peste!* I did my duty. I denounced him on the spot.—I did more. The aristocrat had a faction in the town. It was filled with his dependents. In fact, it had been built

on his grounds, and tenanted by the old hangers-on of the family. So, to make a clear stage, I denounced the town." He clapped his hands, with the exultation of civic triumph.

My recollection of the miseries which his malice had caused, roused me into wrath. He became insolent in turn, until, rash as the act was, I grasped him by the collar, with the full intent of throwing the little writhing wretch out of the window. But, while I was dragging him from the seat to which he clung screaming for help, and had already forced him half-way outside, a shot whistled close by the head of the postilion, which brought him to a full stop. "Mort de ma vie!—Brigands!" exclaimed Monsieur Gilet; and, dropping back into the carriage, attempted to make a screen of my body, by slipping adroitly behind me. Two or three shots now rattled through the trees, followed by a rush of peasants, who unceremoniously knocked down the two officials in front, and began a general scuffle with the gendarmes. The night was so dark, that I could discover nothing of the *mêlée*, but by the blaze of their fusils. All, however, was quieted in a few moments, by the disappearance of the gendarmes, and the complete capture of the convoy; M. Gilet, mayors, and all. Whether we had fallen into the hands of highwaymen, or of stragglers from the French army, was doubtful for a while; as not a syllable was spoken, nor a sound uttered, except by the unhappy functionaries, who grumbled prodigiously, as they were dragged along through "rough and smooth, moss and mire," and whose pace was evidently quickened

by many a kick, and blow of the fusil. This was a rude march for me, too, with my unhealed wound, and my week's sojourn in bed; but I was treated, if not with tenderness, without incivility; while my *compagnons de voyage* were insulted with every contemptuous phrase in a vocabulary, at least as rich in those matters as any other in Europe. At length, after about an hour's rapid movement, we reached an open ground, and one of those wide, old, staring, yet not uncomfortable farm-houses, which are to be found in the northern provinces of France.

Signs of comfort within were visible even at a distance, and the light of a huge wood fire had been seen for the last quarter of an hour, gleaming through the woods, and leaving us in doubt whether we were approaching a horde of gipsies, or about to realize the classic scenes of *Gil Blas*.

But, it was only a farm-house, after all. The good dame of the house, with an enormous cap, enormous petticoats, enormous earrings, and all the glaring good humour of a countenance of domestic plenty and power, came to meet us on the threshold; and her reception of me was ardent, to the very verge of strangulation. Nothing could exceed her rapture, or the fierceness of her embraces, except her indignation at the sight of my travelling companions. Her disgust at the mayor and his deputy—and certainly after their night trip they were not figures to charm the eye—was pitched in the highest key of scorn, or to be surpassed only by the torrent of contempt which her well-practised elocution poured upon the “*traître tailleur*.” I really believe, that,

if she could have boiled him in the huge soup-kettle which bubbled upon the fire; without spoiling our supper; she would have flung him in upon the spot. The peasants who had captured us—bold, tall fellows, well dressed and well armed with cutlass and fusil, in the style of the *gardes-de-chasse*, could scarcely be kept from taking them out to the next tree, to make marks of them; and it was probably by my intercession alone that they were consigned to an out-house for the night. How the scene was to end with me, I knew not; though the jovial visage of my protectress showed me that I was secure. But the prisoners had no sooner been flung out; than I was ushered into an inner room, prepared with somewhat more of attention; where, to my surprise and delight, the Marquis Lanfranc came forward to shake my hand; and, with a thousand expressions of gratitude, made me known to his daughter.

The adventure happened to be of the simplest order. The arrest of the Marquis was, of course, known in an instant, and a party of his foresters had immediately determined to take the law into their own hands; posted themselves on the road by which his carriage was to pass; and released him without difficulty. My release was merely a sequel to the drama. I had been left behind, in the hunting-lodge, by its owner, under the impression, that an individual who could not be moved without hazard of his life, would escape the vengeance of village patriotism. But the nurse had no sooner ascertained that I was to be arrested, than she sent an express to the farm-house. The consequence naturally fol-

lowed, in my liberty ; and the night which I expected to have spent on my way to the dungeon, presented me with the pleasant exchange of a hospitable shelter, the society of an accomplished man, and his handsome daughter ; and last, though least, a couple of kisses from my late nurse ; according to the custom of the country, almost as glowing and remorseless as those of my portly landlady herself.

We sat together, for some hours, and scarcely felt them pass, in the anxious topics which engrossed us—the perils of France, the prospects of the Allies, and the captivity of the unhappy Bourbons. Now and then the conversation turned on their own hairbreadth escapes, and those of their friends. Among the rest, the hazards of the De Tourville family were mentioned, and I heard the name of Clotilde, with a sensation indescribable. The name was connected with such displays of fortitude, nobleness of spirit, and deep devotion to the royal cause, that, if I loved before, I now honoured her. She had saved the lives of her household ; she had, by an act of extraordinary, but most perilous affection, saved the life of her mother, at the moment when the first revolt broke out ; and, young as she was, had exhibited such generosity and strength of mind, that the Marquis's eyes filled with tears as he told it ; and Amalie hid her fine face to conceal her emotions : what must have been mine !

Our conversation was not unfrequently interrupted by bursts of merriment from the outer room, where the peasants sat at a supper, provided by the Marquis for his bold rescuers—an indulgence which they

seemed to enjoy with the highest zest imaginable. Songs were sung with very various kinds of merit in the performer, but all well received. Healths were proposed, in which the existing Government was certainly not much honoured ; and, if the good wishes of the party could have sent the "Committee of Public Safety," the butcher cabinet of France, to the darkest spot on earth, or under it, its time would have been brief. At length, the Marquis and his daughter, who were to be on the wing at daybreak for the German frontier, and who had generously offered to take charge of my invalid frame in the same direction, retired ; and wrapping myself up in a cloak, furnished by my landlady and formed to her showy proportions, I threw myself on the sofa, and was in the land of dreams.

But though I slept, I did not rest. My fever, or my lassitude, or probably some presentiment of the troubled career into which I was to be plunged, made "tired nature's sweet restorer" a stepmother to me. I can never endure to hear the dreams of others, and therefore I cannot endure to inflict my own on them ; but, on that night, Queen Mab, like Jehu, "drove furiously." Every possible species of disappointment, vexation, and difficulty ; every conceivable shape of things, past and present, rushed through my brain ; and all wild, fierce, disastrous, and melancholy.—I was beckoned along dim shades by shapeless phantoms ; I was trampled in battle ; I was brought before a tribunal ; I was on board a ship, which blew up ; I was flung strangling down an infinite depth in a midnight ocean. At length

my horror exceeded the privilege even of dreams. I made one desperate effort to rise, and awoke with a bound on the floor. There I found a real obstacle; a ruffian in a red cap. One strong hand was on my throat; and by the glimmer of the dying lantern, which hung from the roof, I saw the glitter of a pistol-barrel in the other. "Surrender, in the name of the Republic!" were the words which told me my fate. Four or five wearers of the same ominous cap, with sabres and pistols, were round me, and after a brief struggle, I was secured. Cries were now heard outside the door, and a wounded gendarme was brought in, borne in the arms of his comrades. From their confused clamour, I could merely ascertain, that the gendarmes who had escaped in the original *mêlée*, had obtained assistance, and returned on their steps. The farm-house had been surrounded, and the Marquis was indebted only to the vigilance of his peasantry, for a second escape, with his daughter. The *gardes-de-chasse* had kept the gendarmes at bay, until their retreat was secure; and the post-chaise which had brought M. Gilet and his coadjutors, was, by this time, some leagues off, at full speed, beyond the fangs of Republicanism.

This at least was comfort, even though I was left behind. But it was clear, that the gallant old noble was blameless in the matter, and that nothing was to be blamed, but my habitual ill luck. "*En route*," was the last order which I heard; and with a gendarme, in a strange kind of post-waggon rolled out from the farmer's stable, I was despatched, before daybreak, on my startling journey.

I found my gendarme a facetious fellow ; though his merriment might not be well adapted to cheer his prisoner. He whistled, he sang, he screamed, he stamped, to get rid of the ennui of travelling with so silent a companion. He told stories of his own prowess ; libelled M. Gilet, who seemed to be in the worst possible odour with man and woman ; and abused all, mayors, deputy-mayors, and authorities, with the tongue of a leveller. But my facetious friend had his especial *chagrins*.

“I have all my life,” said he, “been longing to see Paris ; and have never been able to stir a step beyond this stupid province. Yet I have had my chances too. I was once valet to a German count, and we were on the way to Paris together, when the post-chaise was stopped, the baron was arrested as a swindler, and I was charged as his accomplice. He was sent to the galleys ; I got off. I then had a second chance. I enlisted in a regiment of dragoons, which was to be quartered in Versailles. But such was my fate, that I had no sooner passed the first drill, when we were ordered off to Lorraine, to watch old King Stanislaus, the Pole, who lived there like one of his own bears, frozen and fat. Still, I was determined to see Paris. I asked leave of absence ; the adjutant laughed at me, the colonel turned on his heel, and the provost-marshal gave me a week of the black hole. But a week is but seven days after all, and on my seeing the parade again—I—”

“You deserted ?”

“Not quite that,” was the reply. “I took leave—and, as I had seen enough of the black hole already,

I took good care to give the provost-marshal no notice on the subject. A fortnight's march brought me within sight of the towers of Notre-Dame. But, as I was resting myself on the roadside, our adjutant, as ill luck would have it, came by in the *coupe* of the diligence. He jumped out. I was seized, given up to the next guard-house, and after fitting me with a pair of fetters, by way of boots, I was ordered to take my passage with a condemned regiment for the West Indies.—There I served ten years; I saw the regiment reduced to a skeleton, by short rations and new rum; and returned the tenth representative of fifteen hundred felons.—At last I have a chance; the *gendarme* of the village was so desperately mauled by the foresters in the attempt to carry you prisoner, that he has been forced to take to his bed, and let me take his place. The thing is certain now.—*You* will be guillotined, but *I* shall see Paris.”

Yet what is certain in this most changeful of possible worlds?

“ Fate granted half the prayer,
The rest the gods dispersed in empty air.”

We had toiled through our long journey, rendered doubly long by the dreariest and deepest roads on earth; and were winding round the spur of Montmartre; when a troop of citizen heroes, coming forth to sweep the country of the retreating Prussians, and whose courage had risen to the boiling point by the news of the retreat, surrounded the carriage. My Prussian uniform was evidence, for the brains of the patriots; and the quick discovery of Parisian ears, that I had not learned my French in their capital,

settled the question, of my being a traitor. The *gendarme* joined in the charge with his natural volubility; but, rather rashly insisted on his right, to take his prisoner into Paris on his own behalf. I saw a cloud gathering on the brow of the *chef*, a short, corpulent, grim-looking fellow, with the true Faubourg St. Antoine physiognomy. The prize was too valuable, not to be turned to good account with the authorities; and he resolved on returning at the head of his brother patriots, to present me as the first-fruits of his martial career. The dispute grew hot; my escort was foolish enough to clap his hand on the hilt of his sabre;—an affront intolerable to a citizen, at the head of fifty or sixty *braves* from the counter or the shambles; the result was, a succession of blows from the whole troop, which finished, in my seeing him stripped of every thing, and flung into the *cachot* of the *corps de garde*; from which his only view of his beloved Paris must have been through iron bars.

My captor, determined to enter the capital, for once, with *éclat*; now seated himself beside me, and, surrounded by his pike-bearers, we began our march down the hill.

My new friend was communicative; and he gave me his history in a breath.—He had been a clerk in one of the small tribunals of the south; inflamed with patriotism, and indignant at the idea of selling his talents at the rate of ten sous a-day, “in a rat-hole called a bureau,” he had resolved on being known to the world, and to Paris he came. “Paris was the

true place for talent." His *civisme* had there become conspicuous; he had "assisted" at the birth of liberty. "He had carried a musket on the 10th of August, and had been appointed by the Republic, to the command of the civic force," which now moved, before and behind me. He was a "*grand homme*" already. "Danton had told him so, within the last fortnight; and France and Europe would no sooner read his last *chanson* on the 'Crimes of Kings,' than his fame would be fixed with posterity."

He then gave me his political creed. "We have cut down the throne," said he, clapping his hands with exultation, "and now you may buy it for firewood.—But you are an aristocrat, and of course a slave; while we have got liberty, equality, and a triumvirate that shears off the heads of traitors, at a sign. Suspicion of being suspected is quite sufficient. Away goes the culprit; a true patriot is ordered to take possession of his house, until the national pleasure is known; and thus every thing goes on well.—Of course, you have heard of the clearance of the prisons. A magnificent work. Five thousand aristocrats, rich, noble, and enemies to their country, sent headless to the shades of tyrants! *Vive la République!* But a grand idea strikes me. You shall see Danton himself, the genius of liberty, the hero of human nature, the terror of kings." The thought was new, and a new thought is enough to turn the brain of the Gaul at any time. He thrust his head out of the window, ordered a general halt; and, instead of taking me to the quarters of the

National Guard, resolved to have the merit of delivering up an "agent of Pitt and his English guineas" to the master of the Republic.

After threading a labyrinth of streets, so dreary and so dilapidated, as almost to give me the idea that I had never been in Paris before, we drove up to the grim entrance of the Abbaye. My companion there left me in charge of the sentinel, and darted in. "And is this," thought I, as I looked round the narrow space of the four walls, "the spot where so many hundreds were butchered; this the scene of the very triumph of massacre; this miserable court the last field of so many gallant lives; these stones the last resting-place of so many, whose tread had been on cloth of gold; these old and crumbling walls, giving the last echo to the voices of statesmen and nobles, the splendid courtiers, the brilliant orators, and the hoary ecclesiastics, of the most superb kingdom of Europe?" Even by the feeble lamp-light, which rather showed the darkness than the forms of the surrounding buildings, it seemed to me that I could discover the colour of the slaughter on the ground; and there still were heaps, in corners, which looked to me like the clay hastily flung over the remnants of the murdered.

But, my reveries were broken up by the return of the little captain, more angry than ever. He had missed the opportunity of seeing the "great man;" who had gone to the Salpêtrière. And some of the small men, who performed as his jackals, having discovered, that the captain was looking for a share

in their plunder, had thought proper to treat him, his commission, and even his civism, with extreme contempt.

“*A la Salpetrière.*” There again disappointment met us. The great man had been there “but a few minutes before,” and we dragged on our slow way through mire and ruts, that would have been formidable to an artillery waggon with all its team. My heart, buoyant as it had been, sank within me as I looked up at the frowning battlements, the huge towers, more resembling those of a fortress than of even a prison, the massive gates, and the general gloomy aspect of the whole vast circumference, giving so emphatic a resemblance of the dreariness and the despair within.

“*Aux Carmes!*” was now the direction; for my conductor’s resolve to earn his reward before day-break, was rendered more pungent by his interview with the *gens de bureau* at the Abbaye. He was sure that they would be instantly on the scent; and if they once took me out of his hands, adieu to dreams, of which Alnaschar, the glassman’s, were only a type.

“You may think yourself fortunate,” he exclaimed, “in having been in my charge! That brute of a country gendarme could have shown you nothing. Now, *I* know every jail in Paris.—I have studied them. They form the true knowledge of a citizen. To crush tyrants, to extinguish nobles, to avenge the cause of reason on priests, and to raise the people to a knowledge of their rights; those are

the triumphs of a patriot. Yet, what teacher is equal to the jail for them all? *Mais, voilà les Carmes !*"

I saw a low range of blank wall, beyond which rose an ancient tower.

"Here," said he, "liberty had a splendid triumph.—A hundred and fifty tonsured apostles of incivism here fell in one day beneath the two-handed sword of freedom.—A cardinal, two archbishops, dignitaries, monks, all hoary with prejudices, antiquated with abuses, extinguishers of the new light of liberty, here were offered on the national altar! *Chantons la Carmagnole.*"

But, he was destined to be disappointed once more.—"Danton had been there, but was suddenly called away by a messenger from the Jacobins."—Our direction was changed again. "Now," said he, "we shall be disappointed no longer. Once engaged in debate, he will be fixed for the night. *Allons*, you shall see the 'grand patriot,' 'the regenerator,' 'the first man in the world.'—*Aux Jacobins !*"

Our unfortunate postillion, falling with fatigue on his horses' necks, proposed going to an inn, and renewing our search in the morning; but, the captain had made up his mind, and, drawing a pistol from his breast, exhibited this significant sign to the driver. The horses, as tired as their driver, were lashed on. I had for some time been considering, as we passed through the deserted streets, whether it was altogether consistent with the feelings of manhood, to suffer myself to be dragged round the capital, at the mercy of this lover of lucre; but

an apathy had come over me, which made me contemptuous of life; although the sight of his pistol rather excited me to make the attempt, from the very insolence of his carrying it. But we still rolled on. At length, in one of the streets, which seemed darker and more miserable than all the rest; we were brought to a full stop by the march of a strong body of the National Guard, which halted in front of an enormous old building, frowning with battlement and bartizan. "*Le Temple!*" exclaimed my companion, with almost a shriek of exultation.

I glanced upward, and saw a light, of that pale glimmer which, in my boyish days, I had always attributed to spectres passing along the dim casements of a gallery. I cannot express how deeply that image sank upon me. I saw there only a huge tomb—the tomb of living royalty,—of the last of a line of monarchs, honoured by all the feelings that still bound the heart of man to France. All was spectral. But, whatever might be the work of my imagination, there was enough of terrible truth before me, to depress, and sting, and wring the mind. Within a step of the spot where I sat, were the noblest and the most unhappy beings in existence—the whole family of the throne, caught in one snare of treason.—Husband, wife, sister, children!—Not one rescued, not one safe, to relieve the wretchedness of their ruin by the hope that there was an individual of their circle beyond their prison bars—all consigned to the grave together—all alike conscious that every day which sent its light through their melancholy casements, only brought them

nearer to a death of misery!—But I must say no more of this. My heart withered within me, as I looked on the towers of the Temple. It almost withers within me, at this moment, when I think of them. They are levelled long since; but, while I write, I see them before me again, a sepulchre; I see the mustering of that crowd of more than savages, which kept guard before their gate; I see the pale glimmer of that lamp, which was then, perhaps, lighting the steps of Marie Antoinette to her solitary cell.

Of all the sights of that melancholy wandering, this sight the most disheartened me. Whatever had been my carelessness of life before, it was now almost scorn. “What was I, when such victims were prepared for sacrifice? What was the crush of my obscure hopes, when the sitters on thrones were thus levelled with the earth? If I perished in the next moment, no chasm would be left in society; perhaps but one or two human beings, if even they, would give a recollection to my grave.—But here the objects of national homage and gallant loyalty, beings whose rising radiance had filled the eye of nations, and whose sudden fall was felt as an eclipse of European light, were exposed to the deepest sufferings of the captive.—What, then, was I, that I should murmur; or, still more, that I should resist; or, most of all, that I should desire to protract an existence which, to this hour, had been that of a vexed spirit; and which, to the last hour of my career, seemed to show but cloud on cloud?”

Some of this depression may have been the physical result of fatigue, for I had been now four-and-twenty hours without rest ; and the dismal streets, the dashing rain, and the utter absence of human movement, as we dragged our dreary way along ; would have made even the floor of a dungeon welcome.

At length, our postillion, after nearly relieving us of all the troubles of this world, by running on the verge of the moat which once surrounded the Bastille ; and where nothing but the screams of my companion prevented him from plunging in, wholly lost his way. The few lamps in this intricate and miserable quarter had been blown out by the tempest, and our only resource appeared to be patience, until the tardy break of a winter's morn. However, this my companion's patriotism would not suffer. "The Club would be adjourned ! Danton would be gone !" He should not hear the Jacobin lion roar, nor have the reward on which he reckoned, for flinging me into his jaws. Utterly indifferent as to where I was to be deposited, I saw and heard nothing, until I was roused by my companion's cry of "*La Place de Grève.*"

A large fire was burning in the midst of its gloomy square ; round which a party of the National Guard were standing, with their muskets piled, and wrapped in their cloaks, against the inclemency of the night. Further off, and in the centre, feebly seen by the low blaze, was a wooden structure, on whose corners torches were flaring in the wind. "*Voilà, la guillotine !*" exclaimed my captor, with

the sort of ecstasy which might issue from the lips of a worshipper. As I raised my eyes, an accidental flash of the fire showed the whole outline of the horrid machine. I saw the glitter of the very axe that was to drop upon my head. My imagination saw even new ghastliness in the shape of its huge scythe-like steel; it seemed made for massacre. All my apathy was now gone. The horrors of public execution stood in a visible shape before me at once. I might have fallen in the field with fortitude; I might have submitted to the death-bed, as the course of nature; I might have even died with exultation, in some great public cause. But, to perish by the frightful thing which shot up its spectral height before me; to be dragged as a spectacle to scoffing and scorning crowds — dragged, perhaps, in the feebleness and squalid helplessness of a confinement, which might have exhibited me to the world in imbecility or cowardice; to be flung, stigmatized as a felon, into the common grave of felons—the thought darted through my mind like a jet of fire; but it gave me the strength of fire. I determined to die by the bayonets of the guard, or by any other death than this. My captor perceived my agitation, and my eye glanced on his withered and malignant visage, as with a smile he was cocking his pistol. I sprang on him like a tiger. In our struggle the pistol went off, and a gush of blood from his cheek showed that it had inflicted a severe wound. I was now his master, and, grasping him by the throat with one hand, with the other I threw open the door and leaped upon the pavement. The report of

the pistol caught the ears of the guard, whom I saw hurrying to unpile their muskets. But this was a work of confusion, and, before they could snatch up their arms, I had made my choice of the darkest and narrowest of the wretched lanes which issue into the square. A few shots were fired after me, and I darted forward, leaving them as they might, to follow.

I twined my course through numberless streets, most of which have been since swept away; but, on turning into the Boulevard, and when I had some hope of taking refuge in my old hotel, I found that I had plunged into a crowd of persons hurrying along, apparently, on some business which strongly excited them. Some carried lanterns, some pikes, and there was a general appearance of more than republican enthusiasm, even of savage ferocity, among them, that gave sufficient evidence of my having fallen into hazardous society. I attempted to draw back, but this would not be permitted; the words, "Spy, traitor, slave of the Monarchiques!" were heaped upon me. It may naturally be supposed that I made all kinds of protestations to escape being piked or pistoled. But they had no time to wait for apologies. The cry of "Death to the traitor!" was followed by the brandishing of a whole circle of knives round me. At that moment, when I must have fallen helplessly, a figure stepped forward, and opening the slide of his dark lantern directly on his own face, whispered the word "Mordecai." I recognised, I shall not say with what feelings, the police agent, who had formerly conveyed me out of the city. He was dressed, like the majority of the crowd, in the republican

costume ; and certainly there never was a more extraordinary figure. He wore the red cap of the butchers of the Faubourgs ; an enormous beard covered his breast, a short Spanish mantle hung from his shoulders, a short leathern doublet, with a belt like an armoury, stuck with knives and pistols, a sabre, and huge trousers striped with red ; the new fashion, to imitate streams of gore, completed the patriot uniform. Others wore broad bands of linen round their waists, inscribed, “2d, 3d, and 4th September,”—the days of massacre ! These were its heroes. I was in the midst of the *élite* of murder.

“Citizens,” exclaimed the Jew in a voice of thunder, driving back the foremost, “hold your hands ; are you about to destroy a friend of freedom ?—Your knives have drunk the blood of aristocrats ; but they are the defence of liberty. This citizen is one of ourselves.—He has returned from the frontier, to join the brave men of Paris, in their march to the downfall of tyrants. But, forward.—Our friends await us in the glorious club of the Jacobins. This is the hour of victory. Advance, regenerated sons of freedom ! Forward, Frenchmen !”

His speech had the full effect. The rapid executors of public vengeance fell back ; and the Jew, whispering to me, “You must follow us, or be killed,”—I chose the easier alternative at once, and stepped forward like a good citizen. As my protector pushed the crowd before him, in which he seemed to be a leader, he said to me from time to

time, "Make no resistance.—A word would be the signal for your death—we are going to the hall of the Jacobins. This is a great night among them, and the chiefs of the party will either be ruined to-night, or be masters of every thing by morning." I remained silent, as I was ordered; and we hurried on, until there was a halt in front of an ancient building. "The hall of the Jacobins," whispered the Jew.

We plunged into the dark passages of a vast pile, evidently once a convent, and where the chill of the massive walls struck to the marrow. I felt, as if walking through a charnel-house. A twinkling light, towards the end of an immense and lofty aisle, was our guide; and the crowd, long familiar with the way, poured on through the intricacies, where so many penitential feet had trod before them. At length, a spiral stair brought us to a large gallery, where our entrance was marked with a shout of congratulation; and stumbling over the benches and each other, we at length took our seats in the loftiest part; which, in both the club and the National Assembly, was called, from its height, the Mountain; and from the character of its possessors, was a mountain of flame.

In the arca below, once the nave of the church, sat the Jacobin club. I now, for the first time, saw that memorable and terrible assemblage. Nothing could be more suited than its aspect to its deeds. The hall was of such extent, that a large portion of it was scarcely visible, and the few lights which hung from the walls but dimly displayed even the

remainder. The French love of decoration had no place here; neither statues nor pictures, neither gilding nor sculpture, relieved the heaviness of the huge hall. Nothing of the arts was visible, but their rudest specimens; the grim effigies of monks and martyrs, or the coarse and blackened carvings of a barbarous age. The area was full; for the club contained nearly two thousand members, and on this night all were present. Yet, except for the occasional cries of approval, or anger, when any speaker had concluded; and the habitual murmur of every large assembly, they might have been taken for a host of spectres; the hall had so entirely the aspect of a huge vault, the air felt so thick, and the gloom was so feebly dispersed by the chandeliers. All was sepulchral. Even the chair of the president stood on a tomb, an antique structure of black marble. The elevated stand, from which the speakers generally addressed the assembly, had the strongest resemblance to a scaffold; and behind it, covering the wall, were suspended chains, and instruments of torture of every horrid kind, used in the dungeons of old times; and, though placed there for the sake of contrast with the mercies of the age of philosophy; yet enhancing the general idea of a scene of death. It required no addition to its gloom, to render the hall of the Jacobins fearful; but the meetings were always held at night, and often prolonged through the whole night. Always stormy, daggers were often drawn and pistols fired—assassination in the streets sometimes followed bitter attacks on the benches; and at this period, the mutual wrath and terror of

the factions had risen to such a height, that every meeting might be regarded as only a prelude to exile or the axe. The deliberation of this especial night was to settle the question, whether the Monarch or the Jacobin club was to ascend the scaffold.—It was the debate on the execution of the unhappy Louis XVI.

The arrival of the crowd, among whom I had taken my unwilling seat, evidently gave new spirits to the regicides; the moment was critical. Even in Jacobinism all were not equally black, and fear of the national revulsion at so desperate a deed startled many. The leaders had held a secret consultation, while the debate was drawing on its slow length; and Danton's old expedient "terror" had been resolved on. His emissaries were suddenly sent round Paris to summon all his banditti; and the low *cafés*, the Faubourg taverns, and every haunt of the very drunkenness of crime, had poured forth. The remnant of the Marseillois—actual galley-slaves, who had led the late massacres; the paid assassins of the Marais, and the *sabreurs* of the Royal Guard, who, after their treason to their king, had found a profitable trade in living on the robbery of the nobles and priests, formed this reinforcement; and their entrance into the gallery was recognized by a clapping of hands from below, which they answered by a triumphant roar, accompanied with the clashing of their knives and sabres.

Danton immediately bounded into the Tribune. I had seen him before, on the fearful night which prepared the attack on the palace; but he was then in

affected savageness of the rabble. He now played the leader of a political sect; and the commencement of his address adopted something of the decorum of public council. In this there was an artifice; for, resistless as the club was, it still retained a jealousy of the superior legislative rank of the assembly of national representatives, the Convention. The forms of the Convention were strictly imitated; and even those Jacobins who usually led the debate, scrupulously wore the dress of the better orders. Robespierre was elaborately dressed, whenever he appeared in the Tribune; and even Danton abandoned the *canaille* costume for the time. I was struck with his showy stature, his bold forehead, and his commanding attitude, as he stood waving his hand over the multitude below, as if he waved a sceptre. His appearance was received with a general shout from the gallery, which he returned by one profound bow; and then stood erect, till all sounds had sunk. His powerful voice then rang through the extent of the hall. He began, by congratulating the people, on their having relieved the Republic from its external dangers. His language at first was moderate, and his recapitulation of the perils which must have befallen a conquered country, was sufficiently true, and even touching; but his tone soon changed, and I saw the true democrat—"What!" he cried, "are those perils, to the horrors of domestic perfidy? What are the ravages on the frontier, to poison and the dagger at our fire-sides? What is a gallant death in the field, to assassination in cold blood? Listen, fellow-citizens, there is *at this hour*

a plot laid for your destruction, deeper than ever existed in the shallow heads, or could ever be executed by the coward hearts, of a foreign soldiery. Where is that plot? In the streets? No. The courage of our brave patriots is as proof against corruption, as it is against fear." This was followed by a shout from the gallery. "Is it in the Tuileries? No; there the national sabre has cut down the tree which cast its deadly fruits among the nation. Where then is the focus of the plot—where the gathering of the storm that is to shake down the battlements of the Republic—where that terrible deposit of combustibles which the noble has gathered, the priest has piled, and the king has stood ready to kindle? Brave citizens, that spot is——," he paused, looking mysteriously round, while a silence deep as death pervaded the multitude; then, as if suddenly recovering himself, he thundered out—"The Temple!"

No language can describe the shout, or the scene, that followed. The daring word was now spoken, which all had anticipated; but which Danton alone had the desperate audacity to utter. The mob in the gallery screamed, howled, roared, embraced each other; then rising, and taking hands, danced, flourished their weapons, and sang the Marseillaise and the Carmagnole. The club below were scarcely less violent in their demonstrations of furious joy. Danton had now accomplished his task; but his vanity thirsted for additional applause, and he entered into a catalogue of his services to Republicanism. In the midst of the detail, a low but singularly penetrating voice was heard from the extremity of the hall.

“Descend, man of massacre!”

I saw Danton start back, as if he had been shot. At length, recovering his breath, he said feebly—

“Citizens, of what am I accused?”

“Of the three days of September,” uttered the voice again, in a tone so deeply sepulchral, that it palpably awed the whole assemblage.

“Who is it that insults me? who dares to malign me?” feebly cried Danton.—There was no answer; and encouraged by the silence, he now exclaimed, “What spy of the Girondists, what traitor of the Bourbons, what hireling of the gold of Pitt is among us?” his visage, even at the distance I could observe, had turned clay-colour.—“Who accuses me?”

“I!” replied the voice, and I saw a thin tall figure stalk up the length of the hall, and stand at the foot of the tribune. “Descend!” was the only word which he spoke; and Danton, as if under a spell; to my astonishment, obeyed without a word, and came down. The stranger instantly sprang into his place—none knew his name; and the rapidity and boldness of his assault suspended all, in wonder like my own. I can give but a most incomplete conception of the extraordinary eloquence of this mysterious intruder.—He charged Danton, with having constructed the whole conspiracy against the unfortunate prisoners of September; with having deceived the people by imaginary alarms of the approach of the enemy; with having plundered the national treasury, to pay the assassins; and, last and most deadly charge of all, with having formed a plan for a National Dictatorship, of which he himself was to be

the first possessor. The charge was sufficiently probable, and was not now heard for the first time. But the intense keenness and fierce promptitude with which the speaker poured the charge upon him, gave it a new aspect; and I could see in the changing physiognomies round me, that the great democrat was already in danger. He obviously felt his peril himself; for starting up from the bench to which he had returned, he cried out, or rather yelled—

“Citizens, this man thirsts for my blood.—Am I to be sacrificed? Am I to be exposed to the daggers of assassins?”—But no answering shout now arose; a dead silence reigned: all eyes were still turned to the tribune. I saw Danton, after a gaze of total helplessness on all sides, throw up his hands, like a drowning man, and stagger back to his seat. But nothing could be more unfortunate than his interruption; for the speaker now poured the renewed invective, like a stream of molten iron, full on his personal character and career.

“Born a beggar, Danton, your only hope of bread was crime. Adopting the profession of an advocate, your only conception of law was chicanery. Coming to Paris, you took up patriotism as a trade, and turned the trade into an imposture.—Trained to dependence, you always hung on some master, till he spurned you. Always a menial, till you could be a tyrant. Always a swindler, till you could be a public plunderer. Always a dastard, until you could be a man of massacre; always a slave, until you could be a regicide!”

Danton had enemies, even among Republicans,

and as I glanced at Robespierre, who was listening with bent brow and the deepest attention, to the language of this fiery speaker, I saw a flash of malignant joy pass across his sallow visage; even sounds of approval began to murmur through the hall. As I again looked towards Danton, I never observed so total a change in any human being. He writhed, like one stretched upon the rack. His broad bold face seemed actually to have been withered by years; if he had drunk poison, it could not have been more ghastly. He strove several times to rise; but his limbs failed, and he sank back again. The speaker, after a pause, like that of the executioner marking a victim bound on the wheel, proceeded to crush him, blow by blow. —“ You licked the dust before Mirabeau; you attempted to betray him, and he trampled on you;— you took refuge in the cavern of Marat, until he found you too base even for his base companionship, and he, too, spurned you; you then clung to the skirts of Robespierre.—Viper! known only by your coils and your poison; like the original serpent, degraded even from the brute into the reptile, you already feel your sentence.—I pronounce it before all. The man to whom you now cling, will crush you. — Maximilien Robespierre, is not your heel already lifted up, to tread out the life of this traitor? Maximilien Robespierre,” he repeated, with a still more piercing tone, “do I not speak the truth? have I not stripped the veil from your thoughts? am I not looking on your heart?”

He then addressed each of the Jacobin leaders, in a brief appeal. “Billaud de Varennes, stand forth—

do you not long to strike your dagger into the bosom of this new tyrant?—Collot d'Herbois, are you not sworn to destroy him?—Couthon, have you not pronounced him perjured, perfidious, and unfit to live?—St. Just, have you not in your bosom the list of those who have pledged themselves, that Danton shall never be Dictator; that his grave shall be dug, before he shall tread on the first step of the throne; that his ashes shall sooner be scattered to the four winds of heaven; that he shall never gorge on France?"

A hollow murmur, like an echo of the vaults beneath, repeated the concluding words. The murmur had scarcely subsided; when this extraordinary apparition, flinging round him a long white cloak, which he had hitherto carried on his arm, and which, in the dim light, gave him the look of one covered with a shroud; cried out, in a voice of still deeper solemnity, "George Jacques Danton, you have this night pronounced the death of your king; I now pronounce your own.—By the victims of the 20th of June—by the victims of the 10th of August—by the victims of the 2nd of September—by the thousands whom your thirst of blood has slain—by the tens of thousands whom your treachery has sent to perish in a foreign grave—by the millions whom the war which you have kindled will lay in the field of slaughter—I cite you to appear before a tribunal, where sits a Judge whom none can elude, and none can defy. Within a year and a month, I cite you to meet the spirits of your victims, before the throne of the Eternal."

He stopped—not a voice was heard. He de-

scended the steps of the Tribune, and stalked slowly through the hall—not a hand was raised against him. He pursued his way, with as much calmness and security as if he had been a supernatural visitant; until he plunged into the darkness, as if he had dissolved in air.

This denunciation threw a complete damp on the regicidal ardour; no one ventured to mount the Tribune. And the club was about to have broken up, for the night; when a loud knocking at one of the gates, and the beating of drums, aroused the drowsy sitters. The “mountain” was still as much awake as ever; but seemed occupied with evident expectation of either a new revolt, or a spectacle; pistols were taken out to be new primed, and the points and edges of knives duly examined. The doors at length were thrown open, and a crowd, one half of whom appeared to be in the last stage of intoxication, and the other half not far from insanity, came, dancing and chorusing, into the body of the building. In the midst of their troop they carried two busts covered with laurels—the busts of the regicides Ravillac and Clement, with flags before them, inscribed, “They were glorious; for they slew kings!” The busts were presented to the president; and their bearers, a pair of *poissardes*, insisted on giving him the republican embrace, in sign of fraternization. The president, in return, invited them to the “honour of a sitting;” and thus reinforced, the discussion on the death of the unhappy monarch commenced once more, and the vote was carried by acclamation. The National Convention was still to be applied to for the

completion of the sentence; but the decree of the Jacobins was the law of the land!

I had often looked towards the gallery door, during the night, for the means of escape; but my police friend had forbade my moving before his return. I therefore remained; until the club were breaking up, and the gallery began to clear. Cautious as I had been, I could not help exhibiting, from time to time, some indignation at the atrocities of the night, and especially at the sentence of the helpless king. In all this I had found a sympathizing neighbour, who had exhibited marked civility in explaining the peculiarities of the place, and giving me brief sketches of the speakers, as they rose in succession. He had especially agreed with me, in deprecating the cruelty of the regicidal sentence. I now rose, to bid my gentlemanlike *ciceroné* good night; when, to my surprise, I saw him make a sign to two loiterers near the door, who instantly pinioned me.

“We cannot part quite so soon, Monsieur l’Aristocrat,” said he; “and though I much regret that I cannot have the honour of accommodating you in the Temple, near your friend, Monsieur Louis Capet; yet you may rely on my services in procuring a lodging in one of the most agreeable prisons in Paris.”

I had been entrapped in the most established style, and I had nothing to thank for it but fortune. Resistance was in vain, for they pointed to the pistols inside their coats; and with a vexed heart, and making many an angry remark on the treachery of the villain who had ensnared me—matters which

fell on his ear probably with about the same effect as the rain on the pavement at my feet—I was put into a close carriage, and, with my captors, carried off to the well known and hideous prison, the St. Lazare.

CHAPTER XXI.

“ A plague upon them. Why should I not hate them ?
Would hatred kill, as doth the mandrake’s groan,
I would invent as bitter searching terms,
Delivered strongly through my fixed teeth,
With full as many signs of deadly hate,
As lean-faced envy in her loathsome hive.”

SHAKSPEARE.

ON reaching the prison, I gave up all for lost ; sullenly resigned myself to what now seemed the will of fate ; and without a word, except in answer to the interrogatory of my name and country, followed the two horrid-looking ruffians who performed the office of turnkeys. The St. Lazare had been a monastery, and its massiveness, gloom, and confusion of buildings ; with its extreme silence at that late hour ; gave me the strongest impression of a huge catacomb above ground. The door of a cell was opened for me, after traversing a long succession of cloisters ; and on a little wooden trestle, and wrapt in my cloak, I attempted to sleep. But if sleep has not much to boast of in Paris at any time, what was it then ? I had scarcely closed my eyes, when I was roused by a rapid succession of musket-shots, fired at the oppo-

site side of the cloister, the light of torches flashing through all the avenues, and the shouts of men and women in wrath, terror, and agony.

I flung myself off my uneasy bed, and climbing up by my prison bars, endeavoured to ascertain the cause of the *mélée*. But the imperfect light served to show little more, than a general mustering of the national guard in the court, and a huge and heavy building, into which they were discharging random shots whenever a head appeared at its casements. A loud huzza followed, whenever one of those shots appeared to take effect, and a laugh equally loud ran through the ranks when the bullet wasted itself on the massive mullions or stained glass of the windows. A tall figure on horseback, whom I afterwards learned to be Henriot, the commandant of the national guard, galloped up and down the court, with the air of a general-in-chief manœuvring an army. He had actually provided himself with a truncheon, to meet all the emergencies of supreme command.

While this sanguinary, and yet mocking, representation of warfare was going on, M. le Commandant was in full eloquence, and prodigious gesticulation. "A la gloire, mes enfans!" was his constant cry. "Fight, *mes braves*! the honour of France demands it: the eyes of Europe—of the world—are turned upon you. *Vive la Republique!*" And all this fanfarronade, accompanied with waving his hat, and spurring his horse into foam and fury.

But, fortune is a jade after all; and the hero of the tricoloured scarf was destined to have his laurels a little shorn, even on this narrow field. While his

charger was rattling over the cloisters, and his veterans from the cellars and counters of Paris, were popping off their muskets at the unfortunates who started up against the old casement, I heard a sudden rush and run ; a low postern of the cloister had been flung back, and the prisoners within the building had made a sally on their tormentors. A massacre at the Bicêtre, in which six thousand perished, had warned these unhappy people, that neither the prison wall, nor night, was to be security against the bloodhounds with whom murder seemed to have grown into a pastime. And after having seen several of their number shot down within their dungeon, they determined, if they must die, at least to die in manly defence. Their rush was perfectly successful ; it had the effect of a complete surprise ; and though their only weapons were fragments of their firewood—for all fire-arms and knives had been taken from them immediately on their entrance into the prison ; they routed the heroes of the guard at the first charge. Even the gallant commander himself only shared the fate of his "*camarades*:" a flourish or two of his sabre, and an adjuration to "liberty," had no other effect than to insure a heavier shower of blows ; and I had the gratification of seeing the braggadocio go down from his saddle in the midst of a group, who certainly had no veneration for the majesty of the truncheon.

The victory was achieved ; but, like many other victories, it produced no results : the gates of the St. Lazare were too strongly guarded to be forced by an unarmed crowd ; and I saw the prisoners successively

and gloomily return to the only roof, melancholy as that was, which could now shelter them.

The morning brought my case before the authorities of this den. Half a dozen coarse and filthy men in uniform, some of them evidently sufferers in the tumult of the night, for their heads were bandaged—a matter which gave good reason to expect increased brutishness in their tempers; formed the tribunal. The hall in which they had established their court, had once been the kitchen of the convent; and, though all signs of hospitality had long vanished, its rude and wild construction, its stone floor and vaulted roof, and even its yawning and dark recesses for the different operations which, in other days, had made it a scene of cheerful bustle; now gave it only a look of extreme dreariness. I could have easily imagined it to be a chamber of the Inquisition. But, men in my circumstances have not much time for the work of fancy; and I was instantly called on for “my name, and business in France.” I had heard enough of popular justice to believe, that I had now arrived within sight of the last struggle; and I resolved to give these ruffians no triumph over the Englishman.

“Citizen, who are you?” Was the first interrogatory, in a fierce tone.

“I am no citizen, no Frenchman, and no republican,” was my answer. My judges stared at each other.

“You are a prisoner. How came you here?”

“You are judges. How came you there?”

"You are charged with crimes against the Republic."

"In my country, no man is expected to criminate himself."

"But you are a traitor: can you deny that?"

"I am no traitor to *my* king; can you say as much for yourselves?" They now began to cast furious glances at me.

"You are insolent; what brought you into the territory of France?"

"The same thing which placed you on that bench—force."

"Are you mad?"

"No—are you?"

"Do you not know that we can send you to the guillotine?"

"If you do, I shall only go before *you*."

This put an end to my interrogatory, at once. I had accidentally touched upon the nerve which quivered in every bosom of these felons. There was a singular presentiment, a kind of superstition, in the midst of all their scoffings, which made the very mention of the grave ominous. Life had already become precarious among the possessors of power; and the slightest intimation of death was actually formidable to a race of villains, whose hands were hourly imbrued in slaughter.

They now felt themselves at once menaced and insulted. An immediate order for my confinement as a "*Brigand Anglais*," was made out by the indignant "commission," and I was transferred from my lonely

cell, into the huge crowded building in the opposite cloister, which had been the scene of the attack on the previous night. I could now with Cato, "smile on the drawn dagger, and defy its point." And I walked from the tribunal with the air of a Cato.

But this change, intended for my infinite degradation, until the guillotine should have dispatched its business in arrear; I found much to my advantage. The man who expects nothing, cannot be hurt by disappointment; and, when I was conducted from my solitary cell into the midst of four or five hundred prisoners, I felt the human feelings rekindle in me, which had been chilled between my four stone walls.

The prisoners with whom I was now to take my chance, were of all ranks, all professions, and degrees of crime. Wealth, however, in the eyes of the democracy, being the unpardonable crime.

But, some of the prisoners were from La Vendée, peasants mixed with nobles; who, though no formal shape of resistance to the republic was yet declared, had exhibited already that gallant contempt of the new tyranny, which afterwards immortalized the name. It was this sturdy portion, which had made the dash on the night of the riot; and their daring had the effect, at least, of saving their fellow-prisoners in future from being made marks, to teach the national guard the art of shooting. Even their sentries kept a respectful distance; and M. Henriot, wisely mindful of his flagellation, flourished his staff of command no more within our cloister. We were, in fact, left almost wholly to ourselves. Yet, if a

philosopher desired to take a lesson in human nature, this was the spot of earth for the study. We had it, in every shape and shade. We had it in the wits and blockheads, the courtiers and the clowns, the opulent and the ruined, the brave and the pusillanimous — and all under the strongest pressure of those feelings which force the nature of man into its most undisguised display.—Death was before every eye. Where was the use of wearing a mask, when the wearer was so soon to part with his head? Pretence gradually vanished, and a general spirit of boldness, frankness, and a bearing, if not exactly of dignity, at least of manliness, superseded the customary cringing of society under a despotism. In all but the name, we were better republicans, than the tribe who shouted in the streets, or robbed in the tribunals.

I made this remark one day to the Marquis de Cassini, a philosopher, and pupil of the great Buffon. "The reason is," said he, "that the minds of men differ chiefly by their circumstances; as the bodies of men differ chiefly by their clothes.—Throw off their dress, whether embroidery or rags, and you will find the same number of ribs in them all."

"But my chief surprise," said I, "is, to find in this prison more mutual kindness, and, in every sense, more generosity of sentiment, than one generally expects to meet with in the world."

"Helvetius would tell you, that all this is self-interest," was my pale-visaged and contemplative friend's reply.

"But," said I, "I always regarded M. Helvetius,

in the light of a well-trained baboon, who thought, that when men stared at his tricks, they were admiring his talents."

"The truth," replied Cassini, "is, that self-interest is the mere creature of society, and is the most active in the basest society. It is the combined cowardice and cruelty, of men struggling for existence; the savageness of the forest, where men cannot gather acorns enough to share with their fellows; the effort for life, where there is but one plank in a storm, and where, if you are to cling at all, it must be by drowning the weaker party. But here," and he cast his eyes round the mingled crowd, "as there is not the slightest possibility that any one of us shall escape, we have the better opportunity of showing our original *bienséance*.—All the selfishness on earth will not save us from the guillotine; and therefore, we are the more ready to accommodate each other, for the rest of our journey."

I agreed with him on the philosophy of the case; and in return, he introduced me to some of the Vendéan nobles, who had hitherto exhibited their general scorn of Parisian contact, by confining themselves to the circle of their followers. I was received with the distinction due to my introducer, and invited to join their supper that night. The prison had once been the chapel of the convent; and though the desecration had taken place a hundred years before, and the revolutionary spoilers had spared but little of the remaining ornament; the original massiveness of the building, and the nobleness of its architecture, had withstood the

assaults of both time and plunder. The roofs of the aisles could not be reached except by flame, and the monuments of the ancient priors and prelates, when they had once been stripped of their bronzes, were too solid for the passing fury of the mob. And thus, among emblems of mortality, and the recollections of old pomp, were flung some hundreds of people, who knew as little of each other as if they had met in a caravansery, and who, perhaps, expected to part as soon. The scene was curious, but by no means uncheerful. The national spirit is inextinguishable; and, however my countrymen may bear up against the extremes of ill-fortune, no man meets its beginnings, with so easy an air as the man of France.

Our supper was laid out in one of the side chapels; and, coarse and scanty as it was, I seldom recollect an evening which I passed with a lighter sense of the burden of a prisoner's time. I found the Vendéan nobles a manlier race, than their more courtly countrymen. Yet they had a courtliness of their own; but it was more the manner of our own country gentlemen of the last century, than the polish of Versailles. Their habits of living on their domains, their intercourse with the peasantry, and the general simplicity of country life, had drawn a strong line of distinction. Like all Frenchmen of the day, they conversed largely upon the politics of France; yet, there was a striking reserve in their style. The existing royal family were but little mentioned, or mentioned only with a kind of sacred respect. Their misfortunes prohibited the slightest

severity of language ; yet still, it was not difficult to see, that those straightforward and honest lords of the soil, who were yet to prove themselves the true chevaliers of France, could feel as acutely the injuries inflicted by the absurdities and vices of the successive administrations, as if they had figured in the clubs of the capital. But the profligacies of the preceding monarch, and the tribe of fools and knaves whom those profligacies as naturally gathered round him, as the plague propagates its own contagion, met with no mercy. Louis XV., Du Barry, and the corrupting and corrupted cabinets, which had at length rendered monarchy odious, were denounced in terms worthy of gallant men ; who, though resolved to sink or swim with the throne, experienced a generous indignation at the crimes which had raised the storm.

We had our *chansons* too, and some of them were as contemptuous, as ever came from the pen of Parisian satire. Among my recollections of the night was one of those songs, of which the *refrain* was—

“ Le Bien-Aimé—*de l'Almanac.*”

A burlesque on the title—Le Bien-Aimé, &c., which the court calendar, and the court calendar *alone*, had annually given to the old king. I can offer only a paraphrase.

“ Louis Quinze, our burning shame !
 Hear our song, ‘ old well-beloved,’
 What if courts and camps are tame,
 (Pension’d beggars, laced and gloved,)
 France’s love grows rather slack,
 Idol of—the Almanac.

- “ Let your flatterers hang or drown,
We are of another school ;
Truth no more shall be put down,
We can call a fool a fool,
Fearless of Bastile or rack,
’Titus of—the Almanac.
- “ Louis, trample on your serfs,
You shall trample us, no more,
Revel in your *parc aux cerfs**,
Eat and drink—’twill soon be o’er.
France will steer another tack,
Solon of—the Almanac !
- “ Hear your praises from your pages,
Hear them from your liveried lords,
Let your valets earn their wages,
Liars, living on their words ;
Other nuts they soon shall crack,
Cæsar of—the Almanac !
- “ When a dotard fills the throne,
Fit for nothing but a nurse,
When a nation’s general groan,
Changes only to its curse ;
What are armies at thy back,
Henri of—the Almanac ?
- “ When the truth is bought and sold,
When the wrongs of man are spurn’d,
Then the crown’s last knell is toll’d,
Then, old Time, thy glass is turn’d,
And comes, flying from thy pack,
To nations a *new* Almanac !
- “ Mistress, minister, Bourbon,
Rule by bayonets, bribes, and spies,
Charlatans in church and throne,
France is opening all her eyes—
Down go minion, king, and quack,
Here’s to *our* new Almanac !”

* A scene of peculiar infamy near Paris.

When I returned to the place where my mattress was flung, the crowd had already sunk to rest, and there was a general silence throughout the building. The few lights which our jailers supplied to us, had become fewer; and, but for the tread of the doubled sentries outside, I might have imagined myself in a vast cemetery. The agitation of the day, followed by the somewhat unsuitable gaiety of the evening, had thrown me into such a state of mental and bodily fatigue, that I had scarcely laid my side on my bed, untempting as it was, before I dropped into a heavy slumber. The ingenuity of our tormentors, however, prohibited our knowing any thing in the shape of indulgence; and in realization of the dramatist's renowned *mot*, "traitors never sleep," the prison door was suddenly flung open at midnight—a drum rattled through the aisle—the whole body of the prisoners were ordered to stand forth, and answer to their names; the ceremony concluding with the march of the night-guard into the chapel, and their being ordered to load with ball cartridge, to give us sufficient knowledge of the result of any attempt in future. This refinement in cruelty we owed to the *escapade* of the night before.

At length, after a variety of insulting queries, even this scene was over. The guard marched out, the roll of their drum died away among the cloisters; we went shivering to our beds; threw ourselves down dressed as we were, and tried to forget France and our jailers.

But a French night, in those times, was like none else, and I had yet to witness a scene, such as I be-

lieve could not have existed in any other country of the globe.

After some period of feverish sleep, I was awakened by a strange murmur, which, mixing with my dreams, had given me the comfortless idea of hearing the roar of the multitude at some of the horrid displays of the guillotine; and as I half opened my unwilling eyes, still dim with sleep, I saw a long procession of figures, in flowing mantles and draperies, moving down the huge hall. A semicircle of beds filled the extremity of the chapel, which had been vacated by a draft of unfortunate beings, carried off during the day to the guillotine. While my eyes, with a strange and almost superstitious anxiety—such is the influence of time and place—followed this extraordinary train, I saw it take possession of the range of beds; each new possessor sitting wrapt in his pale vesture, and perfectly motionless. I can scarcely describe the sensations, with which I continued to gaze on the spectacle. My eyes sometimes closed, and I almost conceived that the whole was a dream; but the forms were too distinct, for this conjecture, and the question with me now became—“are they flesh and blood?” I had not sunk so far into reverie, as to imagine that they were the actual spectres of the unhappy tenants of those beds on the night before, all of whom were now, doubtless, in the grave; but the silence, the distance, and the dimness perplexed me, and I left the question to be settled by the event.—At a gesture from the central figure they all rose, and a man loaded with fetters was brought forward in front of the circle.

I now found that a trial was going on: the group were the judges, the man was the criminal; there was an accuser, there was an advocate, all the general process of a trial was passing before my view. But, all that I could discover was, that the accused was charged with *incivisme*, and that, defying the court and disdaining the charge, he was pronounced guilty—the whole circle standing up, as the sentence was pronounced, and with a solemn waving of their arms and murmur of their voices, assenting to the act of the judge. The victim was then seized upon, swept away into the darkness, and after a brief pause I heard a shriek and a crash;—the sentence had been fulfilled, all was over. The court now covered their heads with their mantles, as if in sorrow for this formidable necessity.

But, how shall I speak of the closing scene? However it surprised and absorbed me in that moment of nervous awe, I can allude to it now, only, as characteristic of a time when every mind in France was half lunatic.—I saw a figure enveloped in star-coloured light, emerge from the darkness, slowly ascend, in a vesture floating round it like the robes which Raphael or Guido gives to the beings of another sphere; and, accompanied by a burst of harmony as it rose, ascend to the roof, where it suddenly disappeared.—All was instantly the silence and the darkness of the grave¹.

Daylight brought back my senses; and I was convinced that the pantomimic spirit of the people,

¹ This extraordinary scene was one of the facts of prison life under the Republic.

however unaccountably it might disregard proprieties, had been busy with the scene. On mentioning it to Cassini, he let me into the solution at once.

“Have you never observed,” said he, “the passion of all people for walking on the edge of a precipice, climbing a church tower, looking down from a battlement, or doing any one thing which gives them the nearest possible chance of breaking their necks? then, you can comprehend the performance of last night. Here we are, like fowls in a coop: every day sees some of us taken out; and the amusement of the remaining fowls is, to imagine how the heads of the others were taken from their bodies. The prisoners were practising a trial.”

I gave an involuntary look of surprise at this species of indulgence, and remarked something on its violation of common feeling—to say nothing of the almost profaneness which it involved.

“As to the feeling,” said Cassini, with that shrug, which no shoulders but those of a Frenchman can ever give, “it is a matter of taste; and perhaps we have no right to dictate in such matters to persons who would think a week a long lease of life, and who, instead of seven days, may not have so many hours. As to the profanation, if your English scruples make you sensitive on such points, I can assure you, that you might have seen some things much more calculated to excite your sensibilities.—The display last night was simply the trial of a royalist; and as we are all more or less angry with republicanism at this moment, and with some small reason too; the royalist, though he was condemned, as every body

now is, was suffered to have his apotheosis.—But I have seen exhibitions, in which the republican was the criminal, and the scene which followed, was really startling even to my rather callous conceptions. Sometimes we had even one of the colossal ruffians, who are now lording it over France. I have seen St. Just, Couthon, Carrier, Danton, nay Robespierre himself, arraigned before our midnight tribunal; for this amusement is the only one which we can enjoy without fear of interruption from our jailers.—Thus we enjoy it with the greatest gusto, and revenge ourselves for the tribulations of the day by trying our tormentors at night.”

“I am satisfied with the reason, although I am not yet quite reconciled to the performance. But, who were the actors?”

“You are now nearer the truth, than you suspected. We have men of every trade here, and, among the rest, we have *actors*, enough to stock the *Comédie Française*. If you remain a little longer among us, you will see some of the best farces of the best time played uncommonly well by our fellow *détenus*. But in the interim—for our theatre is permitted by the municipality, to open in the St. Lazare only four times a month—a piece of cruelty which we all regard as intolerable—our actors refresh their faculties with all kinds of displays. You acknowledge that the scene last night was well got up; and if you should see the trial of some of our ‘Grands Democrats,’ be assured, that your admiration will not be attracted by gossamer draperies, blue lights, or the harmonies of the old asthmatic organ in yonder

gallery ; our pattern will be taken from the last scene of ‘Il Don Giovanni.’ You will have no pasteboard figure suspended from the roof, and wafted upward in starlight or moonlight. But, if you wish to see the exhibition, I am concerned to tell you, that you must wait ; for to-night all our *artistes* are busy. In what, do you conceive ?”

I professed my inability to fathom “the infinite resources of the native mind, where amusement was the question.”

“Well then—not to keep you in suspense—we are to have a masquerade.”

The fact was even so. France having grown tired of all things that had been ; grew tired of weeks, and Decades were the law of the land. The year was divided into packs of ten days each, and she began the great game of time, by shuffling and cutting her cards anew. The change was not marked by any peculiar good fortune ; for it was laughed at, as every thing in France was ; except an order for deportation to the colonies, or a march to the scaffold. The populace, fully admitting the right of government to deal with kings and priests as it pleased ; regarded the interference with their pleasures as a breach of compact ; and the result was, that the populace had their *Dimanche* as well as their *Decadi*, and that the grand experiment for wiping out the Sunday, issued in giving them two holidays instead of one.

It was still early in the day, when some bustle in the porch of the prison turned all eyes towards it, and a new detachment of prisoners was brought in.

I shall say nothing of the scenes of wretchedness which followed ; the wild terrors of women on finding themselves in this melancholy place, which looked, and was, scarcely more than a vestibule to the tomb ; the deep distress of parents, with their children clinging round them, and the general despair ; a despair which was but too well founded. But the tumult of their settling and distribution among the various quarters of the chapel had scarcely subsided, when another scene was at hand. The commissary of the district came in, with a list of the prisoners summoned before the tribunal. Our prison population was thus, like the waters of a bath, as one stream flowed in another flowed out ; but the level was constantly sustained. With an instinctive pang, I heard my name called. Cassini approached me with a smile, which he evidently put on, to conceal his emotion.

“This is quick work, M. Marston,” said he, taking my hand. “But, as the ruffian in the school fable says, ‘Hodie tibi, cras mihi’—twelve hours will probably make all the difference between us.”

I took off the little locket containing my last remembrance of Clotilde, and put it into his hands, requesting him, if he survived, to transmit it to her, with an assurance that I remembered her, in an hour when all else was forgotten.

“I shall perform the part of your legatee,” said he, “till to-morrow ; then I must probably look for some other depositary ; here you know that heirship is rapid, and that the will is to be executed before the ink is dry.” He turned away, to hide his emotion.—

“I have not known you long, sir,” said he; “but in this place we must be expeditious in every thing. You are too young to die. If you are sacrificed, I am convinced that you will die like a gentleman and a man of honour.—And yet I have some hope, some presentiment, nay almost a consciousness, that you will not be cut off; at least until you are as weary of the world, as I am.”

I endeavoured to put on a face of resignation, if not of cheerfulness, and said, “That though my country might revenge my death; my being engaged in its service would only make my condemnation inevitable. But I was prepared.”

“At all events, my young friend,” said he, “if you escape from this pandemonium of France, take this paper, and vindicate the memory of Cassini.”

He gave me a memoir, which I could not help receiving with a smile, from the brevity of the period during which the trust was likely to hold. The gendarme now came up to demand my attendance. I shook hands with the marquis, who at that moment was certainly no philosopher; and followed the train.

We were about fifty in number; and after being placed in open artillery waggons, the procession moved rapidly through the suburb, until we reached one of those dilapidated and hideous-looking buildings, which were still to be found startling the stranger’s eye, with the recollections of the St. Bartholomew and the Fronde.

A crowd, assembled round the door of one of these melancholy abodes, and the bayonets of a

company of the national guard glittering above their heads, indicated the place of our destination. The crowd shouted at the "aristocrats, thirsting for the blood of the good citizens." The guard opened, and we were rapidly passed through several halls, the very dwelling of decay ; until we reached a large court, where the prisoners remained, while the judges were occupied in deciding on the fate of the train which the morning had already provided. I say nothing of the insults which were intended, if not to add new bitterness to death ; to indulge the wretched men and women attending on the tribunal, with opportunities of triumphing over those born to better things. While we remained in the court, shouts too, were heard at intervals, which, as the turnkeys informed us, arose from the spectators of the executions ; death, in these fearful days, immediately following sentence. Yet, to the last, the ludicrous often mingled with the melancholy. While I was taking my place in the file, according to the order of our summons, and was next in rotation for trial ; a smart and over-dressed young man stepped out of his place in the rank, and, drawing from his bosom a large roll of manuscript, presented it to me, with the special entreaty that, "in case I survived, I should take care of its propagation throughout Europe." My answer naturally was, "That my fate was fully as precarious as that of the rest, and that thus I had no conceivable hope of being able to give his pamphlet to mankind."

"*Mais, monsieur,*" that phrase which means so many inexpressible things — "You must observe,

that by putting my pamphlet into your charge, it has a double chance. You may read it as a part of your defence ;—it is a treatise on the government of France, which settles all the disputed questions, reconciles republicanism with monarchy, and shows how a revolution may be made to purify all things, without overthrowing any. Thus my sentiments will become public at once, the world will be enlightened, and, though *you* may perish, France will be saved.”

Nothing could be more convincing ; yet I continued stubborn. He persisted. I suggested the “possibility of my not being suffered to make any defence whatever, but of being swept away at once ; in this case, endangering the total loss of his conceptions to the world ;” but I had to deal with a man of resources.

“*Bon,*” said the author and philanthropist ; “for that event I am already provided. I have a second copy folded on my breast, which I shall read, when I am called on for trial. Thus, those immortal truths shall not be left to accident ; thus, I shall have two chances for celebrity ; the labour of my life shall be known ; nor shall the name of Jean Jacques Pelletier go to the tomb, without the renown due to a philosopher.”

All further deprecation on my part was now cut short by the appearance of the guard, by whom I was marched into the presence of the tribunal. The day had waned, and two or three lamps exhibited to my weary eye the judges, whose decision was to make the difference between life and death, within the

next half hour. Their appearance was the reverse of one, likely to reconcile the unfortunate to the severity of the law. They were seven or eight ruffians, sitting on a raised platform, with a long table in their front, covered with papers, and with what seemed to be property taken from the condemned—watches, purses, and trinkets; and among those piles, the fragments of a dinner—plates and soups, with several bottles of cognac and wine. Justice was so indefatigable in France, that its ministers were forced to mingle all the functions of public and private life together; and to be intoxicated in the act of passing sentence of death was no uncommon casualty.

The judges of those sectional tribunals were generally miscreants, of the lowest description, who had driven away the magistracy; and, under the pretext of administering justice, were actually driving a trade in robbery of every kind. The old costume of the courts of law was, of course, abjured; and the new civic costume, which was obviously constructed on the principle of leaving the hands free for butchery, was displayed *à la rigueur* on the bench. A short coat without sleeves, the shirt sleeves tucked up as for instant execution, the neck open, no collar, fierce moustaches, a head of clotted hair, sometimes a red nightcap stuck on one side, and sometimes a red handkerchief tied round it as a temporary "*bonnet de nuit*"—for the judges frequently, in drunkenness or fatigue, threw themselves on the bench or the floor, and slept—exhibited the regenerated aspect of Themis, in the capital of the polished world.

My name was now called. I shall not say with

what a throb of heart I heard it. But, at the moment when I was stepping forward, I felt my skirt pulled by one of the guard behind me. I looked, and recognized through all his beard, and the hair that in profusion covered his physiognomy, my police friend, who seemed to possess the faculty of being every where—a matter, however, rendered easier to him, by his being in the employ of the government—and who simply whispered the words—“Be firm, and acknowledge nothing.” Slight as the hint was, it had come in good time; for I had grown desperate from the sight of the perpetual horrors round me, and, like Cassini’s idea of the man walking on the edge of the precipice, had felt some inclination to jump off, and take my chance. But now, defiance took the place of despair; and, instead of openly declaring my purposes and performances, my mind was made up to leave them to their own blunders.

On my being marched to the platform between two frightful-looking men, whose coats and trousers seemed to have been dyed in gore, and who, to make “assurance doubly sure,” wore on their waist-belts the word “September,” painted in broad characters; I was then interrogated in nearly the same style as before. I gave them, as before, brief answers.

“Who are you?” asked the principal distributor of rabble justice. The others stooped forward, pen in hand, to record my conviction.

My answer was—

“A man.” (Murmurs on the platform.)

“Whence come you?”

"From your prison."

"You are not a Frenchman?"

"No, thank Heaven!" (Murmurs again.)

"Beware, sir, of insolence to the tribunal. We can send you instantly to punishment."

"I know it.—Why then try me at all?"

"Because, prisoner, we desire to hear the truth first."

"First or last, can you bear to hear it?" (Angry looks, but more attention.)

"We have no time to waste—the business of the Republic must be done. Are you a citizen?"

"I am;—a citizen of the world."

"You must not equivocate with justice. Where did you live before you were arrested?"

"On the globe." (A half-suppressed laugh among the crowd in the back ground.)

"Of what profession?"

"None."

"On what then do you live, have lived, or expect to live?"

"To-day on nothing, for your guards have given me nothing. Yesterday, I lived on what I could get. To-morrow, it depends on circumstances, whether I shall want any thing." (A low murmur of applause among the bystanders, who now gathered closer to the front.)

"Prisoner," said the chief, swilling a glass of cognac to strengthen the solemnity of his jurisprudence, "the Republic must not be trifled with. You are arraigned of *incivisme*. Of what country are you a subject?"

"Of France, while I remain on her territory."

"Have you fought for France?"

"I have; for her laws, her liberty, her property, and her honour." (Bravo! from the crowd.)

"Yet you are not a Republican?"

"No; no more than you are."

This produced confusion on the bench. The hit was contemptuously accidental; but it was a home-thrust at the chief, who had formerly been a domestic in the Tuileries, and was still strongly suspected of being a spy of the Bourbons. The crowd who knew his story, and who are always delighted with a blow at power, burst into a general roar. But a little spruce fellow on the bench, who had already exhibited a desire to take his share in the interrogatory, now thrust his head over the table, and said in his most searching tone—

"To come to the point—Prisoner, how do you live? What are your means? All honest men must have visible means. That is *my* question." (All eyes were turned on me.)

I was now growing angry; and, pointing to the pile of purses and watches on the table—

"No man," said I, "needs ask what are *your* visible means, when they see that pile before you. Yet I doubt if that proves you to be an honest man. That is *my* answer."

The little inquisitor looked furious, and glanced towards the chief for protection; but his intrusion had provoked wrath in that quarter, and his glance was returned with a rigid smile.

"Prisoner," said the head of the tribunal, "though

the question was put improperly, it was in itself a proper one. How do you live?"

"By my abilities."

"That is a very doubtful support in these times."

"I do not recommend *you*, or any of those round you, to make the experiment," was my contemptuous answer.

The bystanders gave a general laugh, in which even the guard joined. To turn the laugh against one, is the most unpardonable of all injuries in France, and my answer roused up the whole tribunal. They scarcely gave themselves the trouble of a consultation. A few nods and whispers settled the whole affair; and the chief, standing up, and drawing his sabre from its sheath; then the significant custom of those places of butchery, pronounced the fatal words, "Guilty of *incivisme*. Let the criminal be conducted to *la Force*,"—the well-known phrase for immediate execution.

The door was opened, from which none ever came back. Two torches were seen glaring down the passage, and I was seized by the grim escort, who were to lead me to the axe.

The affectation of cowardice is as childish as the affectation of courage; but I felt a sensation at that moment which took me by surprise. I had been perfectly assured of my sentence, from the first glance at the judges. If ever there was a spot on earth which deserved Dante's motto of Erebus—it was the revolutionary tribunal. Despair was written all over it, in characters impossible to be mistaken. I had fixed my resolution, to go through

the whole scene, if not with heroism, at least with that decent firmness which becomes a man; yet the sound of the words which consigned me to the scaffold struck me with a general chill. Momentary as the period was, the question passed through my mind, are those paralysed limbs the same which bore me so well through the hazards of the campaign? Why am I to feel the fluttering of heart now, more than when I was facing sabres and cannon-shot? Why am I thus frigid and feeble, when I so lately fought and marched, and defied alike fatigue and wounds? But, I felt in this chamber of death an inconceivable exhaustion, which had never approached me in the havoc of the field. My feet refused to move, my lips to breathe; all objects swam round me, and sick to fainting, I blindly thrust out my hand to save me from falling, and thus giving the last triumph to my murderers.

At this decisive moment, I found my hand caught by a powerful grasp, and a strong voice exclaiming, "Messieurs, I demand the delay of this sentence. The criminal before you is of higher importance to the state, than the wretches whom justice daily compels you to sacrifice. His crime is of a deeper dye. —I exhibit the mandate of the government, to arrest the act of the tribunal, and order him to be reserved, until he reveals the whole of the frightful plots which endanger the Republic."

The speaker then advanced to the platform; and, taking a paper from his bosom, displayed to the court and the crowd, the order for my being remanded to prison, signed by the Triumvirate, whose word was

law in France. Some confusion followed on the bench, and some bustle among the spectators; but the document was undeniable, and my sentence was suspended. I am not sure, that the people within much regretted the delay, however those who had been lingering outside might feel themselves ill-used by a pause in the executions, which had now become a popular amusement; for the crowd instantly pushed forward to witness another trial of sarcasm between me and my judges. But this the new authority sternly forbade.

“The prisoner,” said he, in a dictatorial tone, “is now in *my* charge. He is a prisoner of state—an Englishman—an agent of the monster Pitt”—(he paused, and was answered with a general shudder); “and, above all, has actually been in arms with the fiend Brunswick,” (a general groan,) “and with those worse than fiends, those parricides, those emigrant nobles, who have come to burn our harvests, slay our wives and children, and destroy the proudest monument of human wisdom, the grandest triumph of human success, and the most illustrious monument of the age of regeneration—the Republic of France.” Loud acclamations followed this popular rhetoric; and the panegyrist, grasping me by the arm, walked with me rapidly out of court. All made way for him, and, before another word could be uttered by the astounded bench, we were in one of the covered carriages reserved for prisoners of the higher rank, and on our way, at full gallop, through the intricate streets of Paris.

All this was done with such haste, that I had

scarcely time to know what my own emotions were ; but the relief from immediate death, or rather from those depressing and overwhelming sensations which perhaps make its worst bitterness, was something ; and hope dawned on me once more. Still, it was wholly in vain, that I attempted to make my man of mystery utter a word. Nothing could extort a syllable from him, and he was evidently unwilling that I should even see his face, imperfect as the chance was, among the few lamps which Paris then exhibited to enlighten the dismal darkness of her thoroughfares. Yet, the idea, that my rescue was not without a purpose, predominated ; and I was beginning even to imagine that I already felt the fresh air of the fields, and that our journey would terminate outside the walls of Paris ; when the carriage came to a full stop, and, by the light of a torch streaming on the wind, I saw the gate of the St. Lazare. All was now over ; resistance, or escape, was equally beyond me. The carriage was surrounded by the guard, who ordered me to descend ; their officer received the rescript for my safe custody, and I had nothing before me but the dungeon. But, at the moment when my foot was on the step of the vehicle, my companion stooped forward, and uttered in my ear, the word "Mordecai." I was hurried onward, and the carriage drove away.

This talismanic word changed the current of my thoughts at once. It had so often and so powerfully operated in my favour, that I could scarcely doubt its effect once more ; yet before me were the stern realities of confinement. What dexterity of friend-

ship, or even the stronger love of woman, could make my dungeon vanish into "thin air?" Still there had been an interposition, and to that interposition, whether for future good or ill, it was clearly due, that I was not already flung, a headless trunk, into a nameless grave.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ But where is the iron-bound prisoner, where ?
For the red eye of battle is shut in despair.
Say, mounts he the ocean-wave, banished, forlorn,
Like a limb from his country, cast bleeding and torn,
Oh, no ; for a darker departure is near.
The war-drum is muffled, and black is the bier ;
His death-bell is tolling. Oh, mercy, dispel
Yon sight, that it freezes my spirit to tell.
Life flutters convulsed in his quivering limbs,
And his blood-streaming nostril in agony swims.
Accursed be the faggots that blaze at his feet,
Where his heart shall be thrown ere it ceases to beat,
With the smoke of its ashes, to poison the gale.”

CAMPBELL.

As I passed again through the cloisters, my ear was caught by the sound of music and dancing. The contrast was strong to the scene from which I had just returned. To my look of my surprise, the turnkey answered, “ Perhaps you have forgotten, that this is Decadi, on this night we always have our masquerade. If you have not got a dress, I shall supply you ; my wife is a *friprière* in the Antoine ; she supplies all the civic *fêtes* with costumes, and you may have any dress you like, from a grand signior with his turban, down to a *colporteur* with his pack, or a watchman with his nightcap.”

My mind was still too unsettled, to enjoy masquerading, notwithstanding the temptation of the turnkey's wardrobe; and I felt all that absence of accommodation to circumstances, that want of plasticity, that failure of grasping at every hair's-breadth of enjoyment, which is declared by foreigners to form the prodigious deficiency of John Bull. If I could have taken refuge, for that night at least, in the saddest cell of the old convent, or in the deepest dungeon of the new prison, I should have gone to either with good-will. I longed to lay down my aching brains upon my pillow, and forget the time. But, prisoners have no choice; and the turnkey, after repeating his recommendations, that I should not commit an act of such profound offence, as to appear in the assembly without a domino; if I should take nothing else from the store of the most popular *marchande* in Paris, the wife of his bosom: at last, with a shake of his head at my want of taste, unlocked the gate, and thrust me into the midst of my old quarters, the chapel.

There a new scene indeed awaited me. The place which I had left filled with trembling clusters of people, whole families clinging to each other in terror, loud or mute, but all in the deepest dread of their next summons; I found in a state of the most extravagant festivity—the chapel lighted up from floor to roof—bouquets planted, wherever it was possible to fix an artificial flower—gandy wreaths depending from the galleries—and all the genius of this country of extremes lavished on attempts at decoration. Rude as the materials were, they produced at first sight a remarkably striking effect.

More striking still was the spectacle of the whole multitude, in every grotesque dress of the world, dancing away, as if life was but one festival.

As I stood aloof for a while, wholly dazzled by the glare, the movement, and the multitude; I was recognised by some of my "old" acquaintance—the acquaintance of twenty-four hours—but here time, like every thing else, had changed its meaning, and a new influx had recruited the hall. Cassini and some others came forward and welcomed me, like one who had returned from the tomb—the news of the day was given and exchanged—a bottle of champagne was prescribed as the true medicine for my lowness of pulse—and I gradually gave myself up to the spirit of the hour.

As I wandered through the crowd, a mask dressed as a sylph bent its head over my shoulder, and I heard the words, "Why are you not in a domino?" I made some careless answer. "Go and get one immediately," was the reply. "Take this card, fasten it on your robe, and meet me here again." The mask put a card marked with a large rose into my hand, and glided off among the crowd. I still lingered, leaning against a pillar of the aisle. The mask again approached me. "Monsieur Anglais," was the whisper, "you do not know your friends. Go and furnish yourself with a domino. It is essential to your safety." "Who are my friends, and why do you give me this advice?" was my enquiry. The mask lightly tripped round me, laid its ungloved hand on mine, as if in the mere sport of the dance; and, from its whiteness and delicacy, I saw that it was the hand of a female. I was now more per-

plexed than ever. As the form floated round me with the lightness of a zephyr, it whispered the word "Mordecai," and again flew off into an eddy of the multitude. I now obeyed the command; went to the little shrine, where the turnkey's wife had opened her *friperie*, equipped myself with the dress appointed; and, with the card fixed upon my bosom, returned to take my station beside the pillar. But no sylph came again. I listened for that soft, low voice; but listened in vain. I consoled myself by asking, "what was all this, but the common sport of a masquerade?"

However, an object soon drew the general attention so strongly, as to put an end to private curiosity for a while. This was a mask in the uniform of a national guard, but so outrageously fine, that his *entrée* excited an universal burst of laughter. But when, after a few displays of what was apparently all but intoxication, he began a detail of his own exploits, it was evident that the whole was a daring caricature; and as nothing could be less popular among us than the heroes of the shops, the "Colonels Calicot," and "Moustaches *au comptoir*," all his burlesque told incomparably. The old officers among us, the Vendéans, and all the ladies—for the sex are aristocrats under every government and in every region of the globe—were especially delighted. "Charlemagne Fripon," colonel of the "brave battalion of the Marais," was evidently worth a dozen field-mmarshals, in his own opinion; and his declared contempt for Vendôme, Marlborough, and Frederick le Grand, was only less piquant, than his perfect

imitation and keen burlesque of Santerre, Henriot, and our municipal warriors. At length, when his plaudits and popularity were at their height, he proposed, a general toast to the "young heroism" of the capital, and prefaced it by a camp song, well known in the old French service.

"AVANCEZ, BRAVES GUERRIERS."

"Shoulder arms—brave regiment !
Hark, the bugle sounds, 'advance.'
Pile the baggage—strike the tent ;
France demands you—fight for France.
If the hero gets a ball,
His accounts are closed—that's all !

"Who would waste his days at home,
Made for women to despise ;
When, where'er we choose to roam,
All the world before us lies,
Following our bugle's call ;
Life one holiday—that's all !

"When the soldier's coin is spent,
He has but to fight for more ;
He pays neither tax nor rent,
He's but where he was before.
If he conquer, if he fall—
Fortune de la guerre—that's all !

"Let the peasant live, in toil ;
With the soldier all is sport ;
Let your monks, like vipers, coil
In the cloister, or the court ;
Let them fatten in their stall,
We can fatten too—that's all !

"What care we for fortune's frown,
All that comes, is for the best ;
What's the noble's bed of down
To the soldier's evening rest ?

On the heath, or in the hall ;
All alike to him—that's all !

“ When the morn is on the sky,
Hark the gay *reveillé* rings !
Glory lights the soldier's eye,
To the gory breach he springs,
Plants his colours on the wall,
Wins and wears the *croix*—that's all !”

The dashing style in which this hereditary song of the French soldiery was given by “Colonel Charlemagne Fripon” of the “brave battalion of the Marais,” his awkward imitation of the old *régime*, and his affectation of military nonchalance, excited shouts of applause. His performance was encored, and he was danced round by a group of nymphs and graces ; among whom his towering figure looked like a grenadier of Brobdignag in the circle of a Lilliputian light company. He carried on the farce for a while with great adroitness and animation ; but at length, putting the circle of tinsel and tiffany aside, and striding up to me, he insisted on making me a recruit for the “brave battalion of the Marais.” But I had no desire to play a part in this pantomime, and tried to disengage myself. One word again made me a captive : that word was now “Lafontaine ;” and at the same moment, I saw the sylph bounding to my side. What was I to think of this extraordinary combination ? All was as strange as a dream. The “colonel,” as if fatigued, leaned against the pillar, and slightly removing his mask, I saw, with sudden rejoicing, the features of that gallant young friend, whom I had almost despaired of ever seeing again. “Wait in this spot, until I

return," was all that I heard, before he and the sylph had waltzed away far down the hall.

I waited long, in growing anxiety ; but the pleasantry of the night went on as vividly as ever, and some clever *tableaux vivants* varied the quadrilles. While all eyes were fixed on a well-performed picture of Hector and Andromache, and the hero was in the act of taking the plumed helmet from his brow, with a grace which enchanted our whole female population ; an old Savoyard and his daughter came up, one playing the hand-organ of their country, and the other dancing to her tambourine. This was pretty, but my impatience was ill disposed to look or listen ; when the old man's mask being half turned aside, I again saw my friend. He now moved slowly through the crowd, and I followed. We gradually twined our way through the labyrinth of pillars, leaving the festivity further and further behind, until we came to a low door, at which the Savoyard tapped, and a watchword being given, the cell was opened. There our robes and masks were laid aside ; we found peasant dresses, for which we exchanged them ; and following a muffled figure, who carried a lantern, we commenced our movements once more. At length we came to a stop, and our guide lifting up a ponderous stone which covered the entrance to a deep and dark staircase, we began to descend. I now, with a new feeling of security, heard the voice of Lafontaine at my side. "I doubt," said he, "whether a hundred years ago any one of us would have ventured on a night march of this kind ; for, be it known to you, that we are now in the vaults of

the convent, and shall have to go through a whole regiment of monks and abbots in full parade." I observed that, "if we were to meet them at all, they would be less likely to impede our progress, dead than alive;" but I still advised Lafontaine to allude as little as he could to the subject, lest it might have the effect of alarming our fair companion. "There is no fear of that," he whispered, "for little Julie is in love with M. le Comte, our gallant guide; and a girl of eighteen, desperately in love, is afraid of nothing.—You Englishmen are not remarkable for superstition; and as for me and my compatriots, we have lost our reverence for monks in any shape, since the taking of the Bastile."

We now went on drearily and wearily through a range of catacombs, stopping from time to time to ascertain whether we were pursued; and occasionally not a little startled by the sudden burst of sound that came from the revelry above, through the ventilators of these enormous vaults.

The way was long, damp, and heart-sickening, from the fear of pursuit, and the dread of finding some obstacle at the close. But these were not times for repairing old convents. We found no further obstacle than a decayed portecullis; one of whose bars easily gave way, and we emerged into the open air. Yet, we had not recollected the moat which surrounded the building. There it lay, broad and deep. We were all in consternation. To return, would be misery; to remain, was impossible; to be taken, was death. To attempt the drawbridge, was hopeless,

for there we heard the tread of the sentinel, upon its creaking boards.

We held our little council of war, and with as little effect as councils of war in general. The Count endeavoured to persuade his little Julie to escape by the catacomb, and leave him to his fate. But this she indignantly refused, and I left them with their arms round each other's necks, weeping and repeating vows of eternal fidelity. Lafontaine, bold as a lion, yet easily dejected, wrapped his head in his cloak, and flung himself on the ground, determined to be shot as soon as the daylight should discover him to the sentinel.

My English nature was of "sterner stuff," and thinking that the day of evil could not be put off too far, picked my way among the works of many a year of dilapidation, along the edge of the fosse, and was returning hopelessly; when I observed a light moving along the opposite side. In a few moments more, I saw by the gleam some persons descend the bank, get into a boat, and crossing the moat, pass along at the foot of the wall. From the few words which escaped them, it was evident that they were a party of the secret police, conveying to the convent, according to the Jacobin custom, a prisoner, whom it might have been hazardous to arrest in open day.

I flew back to my despairing friends; embarked them in the boat; and was on the point of stepping in after them, when a shot was fired from the wall above my head. I felt myself struck; and thinking that I was mortally wounded, I pushed the boat off,

and fell. It had scarcely reached the opposite side, before the guard sprang out upon me ; and dying, as I then believed myself to be, I was hurried back into the St. Lazare.

That morning was one of the "grand days" of the guillotine. My wound was no sooner stanch'd, and the surgeons of the prison had no sooner given their opinion, that I was not likely to die by the bullet ; than I was ordered to mount one of the long file of waggons, in which the "conspirators against the freedom of the human race" were to finish their career. The popular love of pageantry was not forgotten in the display, and we were preceded, surrounded, and followed by trumpets, drums, and troops, enough to have formed the triumph of a successful general.

Our procession had more than the usual object of those dreadful displays : it was at once an act of revenge and an act of policy. During the period in which the gates of the convent shut out the living world from us, a desperate struggle had been going on between the two ruling factions. In this contest for life and death, the more furious, of course, triumphed ; for such is the history of rabble revolution in all ages.—The Girondist, with his eloquence, naturally fell before the Jacobin, with his libel ; the Girondist, affecting a deference for law, was trampled by the Jacobin, who valued nothing but force ; the tongue and the pen were extinguished by the dagger ; and this day was the consummation. A debate in the Convention, of singular talent and unexampled ferocity, had finished, by the impeachment of the principal Girondists. Justice here knew nothing

of the "law's delay;" and the fallen orators now headed our melancholy line; bound, bareheaded, half naked, and more than half dead with weariness, shame, and the sense of ruin;—there could scarcely be more in the blow, which put an end to all their perturbations on this side of the grave.

We had frequent halts, and I had full leisure to gaze around; for, rapidly as the guillotine performed its terrible task, our procession had been extended by additional victims from every prison which we passed; and we passed so many, that I began to think the city one vast dungeon. What strange curiosity is it, that could collect such myriads to look upon us? Every street was crowded with a living mass; every casement was filled; every roof presented a line of eyes straining for a glance below. Instead of the crowd of a populous city, I could have believed that I saw the population of a kingdom poured in and compressed into the streets, through which we wound our slow way. From time to time a shout arose, as some conspicuous member of the Convention made his appearance in the vehicle of death: then execrations, scoffs, and insults, of every bitterness, were poured upon the unfortunate culprit; who seldom attempted to make any other return, than a gesture of despair, or a supplication to be suffered to die in peace. Yet all was not insensibility. I saw friends, bold enough to brave the vengeance of the government, press forward, to take a last grasp of the hand that must so soon be cold; and my heart was wrung by partings between still dearer objects and the condemned;—wives rushing

through the multitude ; children held up to their father's arms ; beautiful and graceful young women, forcing their wild way through the line of troops, to take a last look, and exchange a last word, with those whom they would have rejoicingly followed to the tomb !

Our progress lasted half the day ; and the sun was already near its setting, when the waggon in which I sat, turned into the Place de Grève. But I must, I dare, describe no more. I shall not say what I saw in that general receptacle of murder,—the range of low biers which lay surrounding the scaffold, now the last resting-place of men who, but a few hours before, flourished in the possession of every faculty of our being ; and, still more, with all those faculties in the full ardour of public life ; with brilliant ambition to stimulate them, with prospects of boundless power to reward ; and with that most exhilarating and tempting spell of human existence, popular acclamation, resounding in their ears. I had personally known some of them, I had seen them all ; and now, I beheld those highly-gifted, and fiery-souled men, shaken down in an instant, like a shock of corn ; swept to death, as if they were but so many weeds ; extinguished in one moment, and in the next, flung aside, a heap of clay, to make room for other dead. And this was Republicanism—this was the reign of knowledge, the triumph of freedom, the glory of political regeneration ! Even in that most trying moment, when I saw the waggon, in which I had remained the last survivor but one, give up my unfortunate companion to the executioner, in y

parting words to him, as I shook his cold hand, were—"Better the forest and the savage, than republicanism!—Doubly accursed be murder, when it takes the name of freedom!"

I then resolved to see and hear no more; gave a brief and still a fond recollection to England; and, committing my spirit to the Great Disposer of human things I prepared for the final blow!

But, I was again to be respited. While I awaited the summons to mount the fatal steps; a party of dragoons rode into the square, seized every waggon, without a moment's delay, and ordered the whole to be driven out; for the reception of a column of wounded, both French and Austrians, who, having been brought to the city gates, now waited the means of transport to the great military hospital at Vincennes.

The colonel of dragoons in charge of the column, had applied to the government for the means of carriage; they referred him to the municipality; who referred him to the staff of the National Guard; who referred him to the prefect; who referred him to the subprefect; who referred him to his subordinate functionaries; who knew nothing on the subject; until the colonel accidentally heard, that the requisite vehicles were to be seen in the Place de Grève. Indignant at the impertinences of office, and regarding it as the natural right of the soldier, to be first served in all cases; he sent off a squadron at full speed to make the seizure. The affair was settled at once. The remonstrances of the civil officers against our being thus withdrawn from their grasp, were

answered by bursts of laughter at their impudence, and blows with the flat of the sabre for their presumption. The National Guard soon showed that they had no wish to try their bayonets against those expert handlers of the sword; and the whole train of fifty or sixty waggons, of which about a tenth remained full, were hurried down the Boulevard; leaving the scaffold a sinecure. At the barrier, a new arrangement took place; the wounded were piled into the carriages along with us, and the whole were marched to the grand dépôt of the garrison at Paris.

I had seen Vincennes already, and under trying circumstances; its frowning physiognomy had not since been altered, nor, as a prison, was it more congenial to my feelings than before. Yet, on hearing the hollow tread of our horses' hoofs over its drawbridge, and seeing myself actually within its massive walls; I experienced a feeling of satisfaction, which I had never expected to enjoy within bolts and bars. In this world contrast is everything. I had been so fevered with alternate peril and escape; so sick of doubt, and so perplexed with the thousand miseries of flight; that, to find myself secure from casualty for the next twenty-four hours, and relieved from the trouble of thinking for myself, or thinking of anything, was a relief, which amounted almost to a pleasure. I never laid myself down to sleep with greater thankfulness, than when, stretched on the guard-bed of the barrack-room, where the whole crowd of prisoners were packed together, I listened to the beat of the night-drum, and the changing of

the guard. They told me that, for once at least, I might sleep, without a police officer, to bid me, like Master Barnardine, "arise, and be hanged."

Time in a garrison is the most lingering of all conceivable things, except time in a prison. I had it now, loaded with the double weight. There was no resource to be found, in the fractured and bandaged portion of human nature round me. The Austrians were brave boors, who spoke nothing but Styrian or Carinthian, or some border dialect, of which nothing but barbarism had ever heard, and which nothing but Austrian organs could have ever pronounced. The French recruits were from provinces which had their own "beloved patois," and which, to the Parisian, held nearly the same rank of civilized respect, as the kingdom of Ashantee. Besides, it was to be remembered, that all round me was a scene of suffering—the dismal epilogue of a field of battle; or rather the dropping of the curtain on the royal stage; the glitter and the noise gone by, and the actors reduced from their pomps and vanities, and sent home to the shivering necessities of poor human existence.

Life to me was now as stagnant as the ditch round the fortress; all feeling was as languid as the heavy air of our casemates. The mind lost all curiosity relative to the external world; and, beyond the casual knowledge which dropped, with official mystery, from the lips of our governor, and which simply told us, that the war still continued, and that the armies of the Republic were "invincible;" we

could not have been more separated from sympathy, even with Paris itself, if we had been transported to one of the belts of Jupiter. But this was to change.

The commandant one day walked up to me; and with an air of embarrassment put a sealed letter into my hands. It was marked *secret and immediate*. I opened it, and I shall not say with what feelings I saw—an order for my attendance, signed ROBESPIERRE. —

If the grim majesty of death had put his signature in person to this order, it could not have borne a more mortal aspect. I felt a pang; but it did not continue long. Inevitable things are not the hardest to be borne. At all events, there was no time for pondering on the subject; the carriage which had brought the order and the government *huissier*, was at the gate. The commandant, with an ominous look, wished me “good fortune.” I hurried into the carriage, and we flew on the road to Paris.

On reaching the barrier, we turned to the quarter of the Luxembourg, and stopped at the gate of a moderate-looking house. I was shown into a small and simple room; where I found a man, advanced in years, and of a striking aspect. He said not a word; and I had no inclination to converse. The one or two hesitating syllables which I addressed to him, were answered only by a bow, and a look, as if he did not understand the language. I spoke no more; and I awaited the approach of the terror of France, and horror of Europe; during half an hour, which seemed to me interminable.

The door at last opened, a valet came in, and

the name of "Robespierre" thrilled through every fibre; but, instead of the frowning giant to which my fancy had involuntarily attached the name, I saw following him, a slight figure, highly dressed, and even with the air of a fop on the stage. Holding a perfumed handkerchief in one hand, which he waved towards his face like one indulging in the fragrance; and a diamond snuff-box in the other, he advanced with a sliding step; and after a sallow smile to me, and a solemn bow to the old man, congratulated himself on the "honour of the acquaintance, which he had been indebted to his friend Elnathan for making, in person."

I was all astonishment: I had come, in expectation of my death-warrant—I had a reception like an ambassador. I now perplexed myself with the idea, that I had been mistaken for some stranger in the foreign diplomacy; but I was soon set right, by his pronouncing my name, and making some allusions to "the influence of my family in the British Parliament."

Yet, I was still in the tiger's den, and I expected to feel the talons. I was happily disappointed; the claw was sheathed in velvet. A slight refection was brought in by an embroidered domestic, and it was evidently the wish of this tremendous demagogue to appear the man of refinement, for the time.

"My friend Elnathan," said he, "has informed me, that you wish to return to England?"

This was pronounced in the meekest tone of interrogatory; and, with eyes scarcely raised to either of us, he awaited my confirmation of his idea.

It was given most unhesitatingly; and my glance at the countenance of the old man was answered by another; which told me, that I saw the correspondent of my friend Mordecai.

"The circumstances are simply these," said the dictator, in the same delicate tone; "the government has occasion to arrange some matters of importance with the British cabinet. The successes of the Republic have raised jealousies; which it is for the advantage of human nature that we should reconcile, if possible.—France and England are the only free countries: their hostility can only be injurious to freedom."

He paused, and his cold grey eye, after traversing the floor, was slowly raised to me.

I admitted my perfect agreement in the opinion, that "wherever national conflict could be avoided, it was the business of all rational men to maintain peace." I saw a grim smile pass over his sallow features, probably at having found another dupe. Elnathan sat in profound silence, without the movement of a muscle.

Robespierre, rising, now took a letter from a portfolio, and put it into the Jew's hand. He had got over that strange embarrassment with which his habitual nervousness marked his first address; and spoke largely, and with a considerable expression of authority.

"The English government," said he, "have expressed some unnecessary uneasiness at the progress of opinion in Europe. The late victory, which has decided the fate of the Austrian Netherlands, will

probably increase that uneasiness.—Communications through the usual channels are slow, imperfect, and open to espionage.—I have, therefore, applied to my friend Elnathan, to point out some individual in whom he has perfect confidence, and through whom the communication can be made.—He has named you.”

Elnathan, with his huge hands clasped on his breast, and his bushy brows bent deep over his eyes, bent forward, with almost oriental affirmation.

“When will you be ready to set out for Calais?”

“This moment,” was my willing answer.

“No, we are not quite prepared.” He walked for a while about the room, pondering on the subject; then, turning to Elnathan, he directed the Jew to get ready some papers connected with the financial dealings which his Jewish brethren were then beginning to carry on extensively throughout Europe. Those were to be arranged by the next day, and for those I must wait.

“You shall be under the care of Elnathan,” said the master of my fate. “He will obtain your passports from the Foreign Office, and you will leave Paris to-morrow evening, at furthest.—We must avoid all observation, in this matter, Elnathan,” said he, turning to the Jew. “Paris is a hot-bed of spies. Apropos, M. Marston, where do you propose to spend the evening?”

My mind glanced at Vincennes; and his eye, cold as it was, caught my startled conception.

“Pardon me,” said the man of terrors, with the blandest smile which his physiognomy could put on;

“your return to-night to the fortress, would only set all the tongues of Paris in motion to-morrow.—You must be seen in public to-night, at the opera, the theatre, or where you will. You must figure as an Englishman, travelling at his pleasure and his leisure; a *Milor*. What say you, Elnathan?”

“Madame Roland gives a *soirée* to-night,” humbly interposed the Jew.

“Ha!—that is the best of all.—You must go there. You will be seen by all the world. Elnathan will introduce you to the ‘philosophic lady’ of the circle.” He then resumed his pacing round the room. I could observe the vulpine expression of his visage, the twitching of his hands, the keen sidelong look of a man living in perpetual alarm. I saw the *man*.

We now prepared to take our leave; but he suddenly resumed the *petit-maitre*, flourished his perfumed handkerchief again, gave a passing smile to the mirror, and offered me the honours of his snuff-box with the affectation of the stage. But, as we reached the door of the apartment, he made a long, single stride, which brought him up close to me. “Remember, sir,” said he, in a stern voice, wholly unlike the past—“you have it in charge from *me*, to inform your government of the actual feeling of France. It is true, that there are madmen among us; Brissotins, Girondists, and other enthusiasts; who talk of war.—*I* tell you that they *are* madmen, and that *I* will have no war.—There may be conspirators, who wish to shake the Republic, and look to war as the means of raising themselves on its

ruins.—*I* tell you, and you may tell your cabinet, that they shall not accomplish their objects here; and that, if they accomplish them, it will be alone the fault and the folly of England.—Impress those truths on the minds of your countrymen: the Republic desires no war; her principle is peace, her purpose is peace, her prosperity is peace. There will be, there shall be, there must be, no war.” He folded his arms, and stood like a pillar, till we withdrew.

I happened to ascertain shortly afterwards, that, on this very day, Robespierre had presided at a council, which sent off orders to Dumourier, to open the Scheldt; the notorious and direct preliminary to war with England.—Such is the sincerity of diplomacy!

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ The star that bids the shepherd fold,
Now the top of heaven doth hold.
And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay,
In the steep Atlantic stream
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky Pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the east.
Meanwhile, welcome Joy and Feast,
Midnight Shout and Revelry,
Tipsy Dance, and Jollity.
Braid you locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odours, dropping wine.”

MILTON.

I SPENT the rest of the day with Elnathan. His hotel was splendid, and all that surrounded him gave the impression of great opulence ; but it was obvious, that he lived like a man in a gunpowder magazine. He had several sons and daughters, whom, in his fears, he had contrived to send for safety, to his connexions in Germany ; and he now lived alone ; his wife having been dead for some years. All his wealth could not compensate him for the anxiety of his position ; and doubtless he would have perished long

before, in the general massacre of the opulent; except for his being the chief channel of moneyed communication between the government and Germany. In the course of our lonely, but most *recherché*, dinner, he explained to me slightly the means of my recent preservation. The police-officer had acquainted him with my being the bearer of a letter from his friend. The message of the head of the Republic, requiring a confidential bearer of documents, struck him as affording an opportunity for my liberation; and no time was lost in proposing my name to authority.

“And now,” said my entertainer, after drinking my safe arrival, in a bumper of imperial tokay, “En avant, for Madame Roland.”

We drove to a splendid mansion in the Rue de la Revolution. The street in front was crowded with equipages. The house had belonged to the Austrian ambassador; and, on the declaration of war, it had been taken possession of by the Republic without ceremony.

I observed to Elnathan, as we passed through the long and stately suite of rooms, that, “to judge from the furniture, republicanism was not republican everywhere.”

“Nowhere, but in the streets, or the prisons,” was his reply, in a whisper. “Since the Austrian left it, the whole hotel has been furnished anew, at the most profuse expense, which I had the honour of supplying.—Roland is a great personage, but a nobody, a mill-horse at the wheel of office. He is probably drudging over his desk, at this moment; but Madame is of another mould.—La voilà!” He turned,

and made a profound bow to a very showy female, who had advanced from a group, for the purpose of receiving the Jew and the stranger. I had now, for the first time, the honour of seeing this remarkable personage. Her figure was certainly striking, and her physiognomy conveyed a great deal of her character for intelligence and decision. She had evidently dressed herself on the model of the *classique*; and though not handsome enough for a Venus, nor light enough for a nymph, she might have made a tolerable Minerva. She had probably some thoughts of the kind; for before we had time to make our bows, she threw herself into an attitude of the *Galerie des Antiques*, and, with her eyes fixed profoundly on the ground, awaited our incense. But when this part was played, the idol condescended to become human, and she spoke with that torrent of language which her clever countrywomen have at such unrivalled command.

She was “delighted, charmed, enchanted,” to make my acquaintance.—“She had owed many marks of friendship to M. Elnathan; but this surpassed them all—she admired the English—they were always the friends of liberty—France was now beginning a race in the arena of freedom. The rivalry was brilliant, the prize was inestimable.” I could only bow. Again, “she was enraptured to meet an Englishman; the countryman of Milton and Wilkes, of Charles Fox and William Tell.” I fear that I gave a smile to her remorseless *mélange*. But she was above all embarrassment; and still poured out her historic

raptures. "She adored England, the cradle of Cromwell and Luther—she had been lately studying our history, and had wept floods of tears over the execution of William III.—*Enfin*, she hoped that Shakspeare, 'ce beau, ce superbe Shakspeare,' was in good health, and meant to give the world many, many more charming tragedies."

Madame had now discharged her first volley; and she wheeled back upon a group of members of the Convention, sullen-looking sages, with wild hair hanging over their shoulders, and the genuine Carmagnole physiognomy. With these men she was evidently deep in vehement discussion, and her whole volume of politics was flung at their heads with as little mercy, as her literary stores had been poured upon me.

But the crowd pressed towards another object of curiosity, and I followed it, under the guidance of my Asmodeus; to a music room, splendidly fitted up, and filled with the most select orchestra of the capital. But it was an amateur, that was there to attract all eyes and ears.—"Madame de Fontenai," whispered the Jew, as he glanced towards a woman of a singularly expressive countenance and statue-like form, half sitting, half reposing, on a sofa. She was surrounded by a group soliciting her, for a "few notes, a suspiration, a *soupeçon*"—of, as Elnathan observed to me, "one of the most delicious voices which had ever crossed the Pyrenees," and the Jew had all the musical taste of his nation. At last, the siren consented, and a harp was brought, and placed before her, with the same homage which might have at-

tended an offering to the Queen of Cyprus, in her own island, three thousand years ago.

After a brief and brilliant prelude, which showed her perfect command of the instrument, and trying her voice, in a few notes, whose sweetness justified Elnathan's panegyric; throwing up her fine eyes, as if to meet some descending inspiration, she began. Her style was to me entirely new, and was exquisite; and rather letting her hand drop among the strings, than striking them, and rather breathing out her feelings, than performing any music of mortal composition, she sang one of the fantastic, but impassioned reveries of "the sweet south."

MADRIGAL.

"Tus ojos y los mios
 Se miran y hablan.
 Pero los corazones
 No se declaran.
 Mas te prevengo
 Que si tu no te explicas,
 Yo no te entiendo.

 "Las dudas de un amante
 No han de saberse,
 Que al decirlas se sabe.
 Que desmerecen.
 No—en el silencio
 No son pensamientos
 Del mas aprecio *."

* "Silence is the true love-token;
 Passion only speaks in sighs;
 Would you keep its charm unbroken,
 Trust the eloquence of eyes.
 Ah no!
 Not so.

[From

The song closed in a burst of plaudits, as general and marked as if they had been given to a *prima donna* in a theatre, and she received them as if she was in a theatre.

“You should be presented to Madame de Fontenai,” was my guide’s suggestion.—“She is our reigning *célébrité* at present, as Madame Roland is our *publicité*. You see we are nice in our distinctions.—I shall probably to-night show you another, a very handsome creature indeed, without half the talents of either, but with more admirers than both; who has obtained the title of our *félicité*.”

But who, or what, is this fascinating creature?

“The daughter of Cabarus, the Spanish ambassador here some years ago. She is now a widow, rich, giving *recherché* suppers, followed by all the world, and, as she declares, *persecuted* by M. Tallien; who, as perseverance is nine-tenths of success in everything, will probably succeed in making her Madame Tallien.”

I had now the honour of being presented, and was received with very flattering attention. This I probably owed to the Jew, who seemed to have the key

From my soul all doubts remove;
Tell me, tell me—that you love.

“Looks the heart alone discover;
If the tongue its thoughts can tell,
’Tis in vain you play the lover,
You have never *felt* the spell.

Ah no!

Not so.

Speak the word, all words above;
Tell me, tell me—that you love.”

to every one's smiles, as he had to most of their *escritoires*. She was certainly a person of most distinguished appearance.—Not handsome, so far as beauty depends on feature; for she had the olive tinge of her country, and she had the *not* Spanish “*petit nez retroussé*.” But her figure was fine; and never was any costume more studied to exhibit all its graces. Accustomed as I had become to foreign life, I acknowledge, that I was a little surprised at the unhesitatingly *classical* development of her form;—arms naked to the shoulder, or clasped only with golden serpents; a robe *à la Diane*, and succinct as ever huntress wore; silver sandals, a jewelled cestus, and a tunic of white satin deeply embroidered with gold, depending simply to the knee!

But when she placed me on the sofa beside her, and entered into conversation, everything was forgotten, in her incomparable elegance of manner. She had singular brilliancy of eye; it almost spoke; it perpetually flashed, and it filled up the pauses when she ceased to speak, with a meaning absolutely mental. But her language was eloquent; sometimes, in that tone of gentle and touching confidence, which wins upon the feelings; sometimes, in that animation, which made the hearer almost think that he was looking at her soul through her vivid countenance. Before a few minutes had elapsed, I could fully comprehend her title, to the renown of the most captivating conversationist of Paris.

As I at length relinquished this enviable and envied position, to give way to the crowd who brought their tribute to the *fauteuil*, or rather the

shrine, of this dazzling woman—"You have still," said my companion, "to see another of our sovereigns; for, as we have a triumvirate in the Tuileries, the world of taste is ruled by three rivals; and they are curiously characteristic of the classes from which they have sprung. The lady of the mansion, you must have perceived to be, republican, in every sense of the word—clever undoubtedly, but as undoubtedly bourgeoisie; intelligent in no slight degree, but too much in earnest for elegance; perpetually taking the lead on those desperate subjects, in which women can only be, and ought to be, smatterers; and all this, to the infinite amusement of her hearers, and the unbounded terror of her meek and very helpless husband."

I remarked, "that she had, at least, the important merit, of giving very splendid entertainments."

"Yes, and of also possessing as honest a heart as she possesses a rash brain. She is kind, generous, and even rational, where she has not a revolution to make, or to unmake. But, suffer her to touch on politics, and you might as well bring a lunatic into the light of the full moon."

"But that singular being, to whom we have just been listening, and whose song I shall hear to-night in my dreams—can she be a politician, a republican? I have never seen a countenance more likely to be contemptuous of the *canaille*!"

"You are perfectly in the right. She has a sphere of her own, which has no more to do with our world, than if she lived in the evening star.—She exists simply to enjoy homage, and to reward it, as you

have seen, by a song or a smile ; yet she too has been on the verge of the scaffold. Some of our leading political characters are contending for her influence, her fortune, or her hand ; and whether the contest will end in raising M. Tallien to the head of the Republic, or extinguishing him within the week, is a question which chance alone can decide.—She may yet be a queen.”

“She seems fitter to be a Circe, or a Calypso. Or if a queen, she would be a Cleopatra.”

“No,” said Elnathan, with the only laugh which I had seen on his solemn visage during the night. “She has known too much of courts, to desire royalty. She reigns, as the widow of M. de Fontenai. If Tallien falls, she will have the power of choosing from all his successors.—When age comes at last, and conquests are hopeless, she will turn *dévoté*, fly to her native Spain, abjure the face of man, spend her money on wax-dolls ; and after being worshipped by the multitude as a saint, and panegyricized by the monks as a miracle ; she will die with her face turned to Paris after all, as good Mussulmen send their last breath in the direction of Mecca.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ Crowds in the lighted street,
And the chariots rush and roll,
And the stifling throng, as when numbers meet
With one impulse of soul :
I plunged into that tide,
As it rushed resistless where
The proud theatre’s portals wide
Shook to the echoing air.
Slowly the curtain rose :
A woman there stood lone,
’Mid a pulseless hush, such as marks the close
Of some warring trumpet’s tone ;
Parted her lips, and from that hour,
My life of life began.”

SIMMONS.

WE now plunged into the centre of a circle of men in military costume, full of the war, and criticising Dumourier’s campaign with the utmost severity. As I listened, with some surprise at the multiplicity of capital errors, which the most successful general of France had contrived to squeeze into a single month of operations, I observed a man, of a pale thin visage, like one suffering from ill health or excessive mental toil, but of a singularly

intellectual expression ; listening to the group of tacticians, with a quiet smile.

“Let me have the honour of presenting M. Marston to the minister at war,” was my introduction to the celebrated Carnot ; with whom Elnathan seemed to be on terms of peculiar intimacy. The minister entered at once, and good-humouredly, into conversation.

“You must not think our favourite general,” said he, “altogether the military novice, which those gentlemen of the National Guard have decided him to be. I feel an additional interest in the question, because I myself had a little official battle to fight, to place him at the head of the army of Flanders. But I saw that he had military talent, and that, with a republic, cancels all sins.”

I made some passing remark, on the idleness of disputing the ability of an officer who answered cavils by conquests ; observing, that the only rational altar raised by the Romans, a people of warriors, was to “Good Fortune.”

“Ah yes, you think, in the Choiseul style, that the first question in choosing a general should be, ‘is he lucky?’ I must own, that General Dumourier has fought his battle, against principle. But those gentlemen do not perceive, that *there* lies the very merit for which the Republic must uphold him. His troops were in an exhausted country ; they had provisions but for two days. He must fight at once or retreat.—Another general might have retreated ; and made his apology by the state of his haversacks. Dumourier took the other alternative : he fought ;

and the general who fights, is the only general who gains victories."

One of the tacticians at whom he had indulged in a sneer, Santerre, the commandant of the city cavalry, a huge and heavy hero, with enormous jack-boots and a clattering sabre, now strode up to us, and pronounced that the campaign had been hitherto "against all rule."

"You mistake, my good friend," said the now half angry minister—"you mistake acting above rule, for acting against rule.—Our war is new, our force is new, our position new; and we must meet the struggle by new means. Follow the routine, and all is lost. Invent, act, hazard, strike, and we shall triumph; as Dumourier has done."

Santerre attempted to say something; but the fiery little tactician would not be interrupted.

"France is surrounded with enemies. To conquer, we must astonish. If we wait to be attacked, we must feel the weakness of defence—the spirit of the French soldier is attack. Within the frontier, he is a bird in a cage; beyond it, he is a bird in the air. Why has France always triumphed in the beginning of a war? because she has always invaded.—The French soldier must march, he must fight, he must feel that he hazards every thing, before he rises to that pitch of daring, that ardour, that *élan*, by which he gains every thing.—Let him, like the Greek, burn his ships behind him, and from that moment he is invincible."

I listened with strong interest to this development of the principles on which the great war of

Europe was to be sustained. The speaker uttered his oracular sentences with a glow, which left his hearers almost as breathless as himself. I saw before me the living genius of French victory.

While we were standing, silenced by this burst; an incident occurred, as if expressly to give demonstration to his theory. An aide-de-camp entered the room, bringing despatches from the army of Flanders. He had but just arrived in Paris, and not finding the war-minister at his bureau, had followed him. Of course, the strongest conceivable curiosity was excited; but not a syllable was to be learned from the official mystery of the aide-de camp. He made his advance to the minister, deposited the despatch in his hands, and then drew up his stately figure, impervious to all questioning. Carnot retired to an alcove, to read the missive, and in the mean time, the general anxiety rose to an absolute fever. The dance ceased, the tables of loto and faro were deserted, the whole business of life was broken up, and five hundred of the handsomest, most brilliant, best dressed of the earth, were left standing in an agony of suspense. It would have justified a counter-revolution.

At length Carnot, probably wholly forgetting the scene of suffering which he had left behind, came forward, with the important despatch, open in his hand. When he read the date, and pronounced the words "Head-quarters, Brussels," all was known, and all was rapture. The French deserve good news, beyond all other people of the globe, for none ever enjoy it so much. I thought, that they would have embraced the little minister to death; no living man

certainly was ever nearer being pressed into Elysium. Absolute shouts of *Vive la République !* and plaudits from innumerable pairs of the most delicate hands, echoed through the suite of *salons*. The lady of the mansion made a set speech to him, at the conclusion of which she rushed on him with open arms, and kissed him on both cheeks, "*Au nom de la République.*" Even the ethereal Madame de Fontenai condescended so far to human feelings, as to move from her couch, advance, drooping her fine eyes, and, with her hand on her bosom, like a sultana, bend her magnificent head in silent homage before him. I watched the pantomime of this matchless creature, with a full acknowledgment of its beauty. A single word would have impaired it; but she did not utter a syllable. On retiring, she slowly raised her expressive countenance, as if she thanked some visionary protector of France for this crowning triumph; and then, with hands clasped, and step by step, sank back into the crowd.

Supper was now announced; and we were led into a new suite of rooms, filled with all the luxuries and hospitalities of a most sumptuous entertainment. Carnot, now doubly popular, was surrounded by the whole *élite* of name and beauty. But, whether from the politeness, by which even the republicans of former rank were desirous of distinguishing themselves from the *roturier*, or with the purpose of making his opinions known in that country which has been always the great tribunal of European opinion, and always will be,—he made *me* sit down by his side.

He talked largely of our interests, and continually

reverted to the advantages of a closer alliance with France. "The two countries," said he, "are made for combination; combined, they could conquer the globe; France the empire of the land, England the empire of the sea.—Nature has divided between them the sceptre of the world."

I observed that "when the conquest was achieved, the victors, like Augustus and Antony, might quarrel at last."

"Well, then, even if they did, the combat would finish in a day, what it would have taken centuries of the tardy wars of old times to decide. Six hours at Pharsalia settled the civil wars of Rome, and pacified the world for five hundred years."

"But, which side would be content to be the beaten one?" I asked.

"Neither," replied a cynical, but remarkably broad-foreheaded and deep-browed personage, at the opposite side of the table. "The combat would be eternal, or must end in mutual ruin. An universal empire would be beyond the government of man by law, or his control by the sword.—I prefer enlightening the people, until they shall want no controul."

"But will they buy your lamp?" said Carnot, with a smile.

"At least they have done so pretty extensively, if I am to believe the public. It was but this day, that I received a notice, that there had been sent forth the hundred thousandth copy of my '*Qu'est ce que le Tiers Etat?*'"

"That was not a lamp, but a firebrand," said a

hollow voice, at a distance down the table; which reminded me of the extraordinary orator whom I had heard in the Jacobin Club. Carnot looked round to discover this strange accuser, and added, in a loud and stern tone—

“Whether lamp or firebrand, I pronounce to all good Frenchmen, that it was a great gift to France. It was the grammar of a new language, the language of liberty! It was the sound of a trumpet, the trumpet of revolution! Still, M. de Sieyès,” said he, turning to the author of this celebrated performance, “all things have their time, and yours is not yet come. I cannot give up the soldier.—I am for no civil movement, when the country is in peril. You must sweep war from your gates, before you can sit down to teach a people. Even then the task is not easy. To know nothing, or to know something badly, are two kinds of ignorance, which will always tempt the majority of mankind.”

“Is there not a third kind of ignorance more dangerous still—that of knowing more than one *ought* to know?” interposed another speaker, whose countenance had already struck me. His composed yet keen physiognomy strongly reminded me of the portraits of the Italian Conclave—some of the cardinals of Giorgione and Titian; at once subtle and dignified.

Carnot smiled, and said to me in a low tone, “That is a touch at Sieyès. Those two men never meet, without a fencing-match. One of them has been a bishop, and cannot forgive the loss of his mitre.

Sieyès has been nothing, but intends to be more than a bishop yet—if he can. Talleyrand and he hate each other, with the hatred of rival beauties.”

It was evident that Sieyès was stung. He almost sprang from his seat. I saw his powerful countenance flush to the forehead. But he merely said—“Pray, Monsieur, what is a vizard? Is it not the favourite instrument of a hypocrite?”

The character of the person to whom the question was addressed seemed to be known; and a smothered laugh ran round the table. But there was not the slightest appearance of perturbation in his manner, as he answered—

“Monsieur, I shall have the honour to inform you. A vizard is a contrivance for concealment, whether in pasteboard, or in an inflexible visage—whether in a woman, who seeks to disguise her features, or in a man who seeks to hide his heart—whether in a masquerader, or an assassin.—For example, when I hear a spy talk of his honesty, an intriguer of his conscience, a renegade of his candour, or a pensioner of his patriotism, I do not require to look at him—I say at once, that man wears a vizard.” He paused a moment. “This,” said he, “is the vizard in public life. In private, it is the impartiality of authors to their own performances, the justice of partizans, the originality of plagiaries, and the principle of *pamphleteers*.”

This daring delivery of sentiment hit so many, that it could be resented by none; for no one could have assailed it, without making himself responsible to the whole charge. Silence fell upon the table.

However, lapses of this order are not fatal in France, and the topic of the campaign was too recent not to press once more. Various anecdotes of the gallantry of the troops were detailed, and the conversation was again led by the minister. "These instances of heroism," said he, "show us the spirit which war, and war alone, can kindle in a people. In peace, the lower qualities take the lead; in war, the higher. The man must then be shown; deception can have place no longer; the mind grows muscular like the frame; the spirit glows with the blood; a nobler career of eminence spreads before the nation, cheered by rewards, at once of a more splendid rank, and distributed on a loftier principle.—We shall no more have a Pompadour, or a Du Barry, giving governments and marshals' batons. The character of the nation will become, like its swords, at once bright, sharp, and solid; the reign of corruption is gone already, the reign of dupery cannot long survive. France will set an example, which the world will be proud to imitate, or will be forced to follow."

"You remind me, Monsieur le Ministre, of the Spartans; who, when they returned from beating the enemy, found their slaves in possession of their households. You conquer Prussians and Austrians on the frontier, and leave monks at home.—But, as long as you spare the spiders, you must not complain of cobwebs. Crush intriguers, and you will put an end to intrigue," said the bold ex-bishop.

"The man insults the Republic, who charges her citizens with intrigue," was the whispered, and very

formidable, menace of Sieyès. "Monsieur, you have yet to learn, what is a constitution."

The Abbé had incurred some ridicule by his readiness in proposing constitutions. His antagonist, like a hornet, instantly fixed his sting upon the naked spot.

"Pardon me, Monsieur, I perfectly know what is a modern constitution—it is the credit of a charlatan—it is the stock of a political pedlar, made only for sale to simpletons—it is an umbrella, to be taken down, when it rains—it is a surtout in summer, and nakedness in winter. It is, in short, a contrivance, to make a reputation for a sciolist, and to govern mankind on the principles of a dreamer."

"This is the language of faction," exclaimed Sieyès, indignantly rising.

"No," said his imperturbable antagonist; "the language of faction is the language of quacks; it is the language learned in the clubs and taught in the streets, the language which takes it for granted, that the hearer is as destitute of brains, as the speaker is of principle." All eyes were now turned on the parties.

But his hearer simply said, yet with a glance of fire—

"Monseigneur, you should remember, that you are not now in your old diocese, haranguing your chaplains. You forget also, that in France the age of quackery is over. There are no more dupes—have *you* your passports ready?"

This produced not even a sneer on the marble countenance of the adversary.

“Monsieur de Sicyès,” was the ready reply, “let me not, at least, hear *you* talk of despair. Quackery will never be at an end in France.—The quack is a polypus; cut him into a thousand pieces, he only grows the faster;—he is a fungus, give him only a stone to cling to, and he covers it;—he is the viper, even while he hides in his hole, only preparing to bite in the sunshine; and when all the world think him frozen for life, only concocting venom for his summer exploits.—Quacks will live, as long as there are dupes, as leeches will live, as long as there are asses’ heels to hang on.” He then rose, making a profound bow, with “Bon soir, Monsieur l’Abbé—never fear—dupes will be eternal.”

This produced some confusion and consternation, among the friends of Sicyès. But a new scene of the night was announced, and all flowed towards the private theatre.

I was yet to see more of this daring talker; but I was not surprised to hear next day, that he had left Paris at midnight, and was gone, no one knew whither. The capital might have been hazardous for him. Sicyès was probably above revenge; but there were those, who would have readily taken the part upon themselves, and a *ci-devant* bishop would have made a showy victim. How he escaped even so long, is among the wonders of a life of wonder. I afterwards saw the fugitive, at the head of European councils, a prince and a prime minister; the overthrower of the dynasty by which he rose, the restorer of the dynasty under which he fell; bearing a charmed life, and passing among the havoc of

factions, and even escaping from the wrecks of empire, more like an impalpable spirit than a man.

But the change of his style in after-life, was scarcely less remarkable than the change of his fortunes. He was then no longer the hot and heady satirist; he had become the sly and subtle scorner. No man said so many cutting things, though, so few of which any one could take advantage: he anatomized human character, without the appearance of inflicting a wound; had all the pungency of wit without its peril, and reigned supreme by a terror, which every one pretended *not* to feel. The change, after all, was only one of weapons; in the first period it was the knife, in the second the razor—and perhaps the latter was the more deadly of the two.

The theatre was fitted up with the taste, of a people more essentially theatrical than any other in the world. Not merely the eye, but the tongue, of France is theatrical; not merely the stage, but every portion of private life; every sentiment, every sound, is theatrical; the stage itself is the only natural thing in the country, from Calais to Bayonne.

As we took our seats in the little gilded box, made only for two; though probably for *tête-à-têtes* of a more imaginative order than ours; Elnathan observed to me, “You will now see two of the most remarkable *artistes* in France—Talma, beyond all comparison our first actor; and another, an amateur, whom I think altogether one of the finest women in existence.—You may pronounce, that she ought to be younger, for perfection; but there is a beauty in the fruit as well as in the flower, and not the less

beautiful, for its being of a different kind. But, judge for yourself."

The curtain now drew up, and we saw the commencement of the little *drame* of *Paul et Virginie*. St. Pierre's charming story has since been worn out on all the boards of Europe ; but it was then new to the stage, and the audience gazed and listened, and were agonized and enraptured, in all the freshness which novelty could give. It must be owned, that the whole stage preparation exhibited the national skill. The scenery was painted by the first Parisian artists. We had to the life, the luxuriant vegetation of the Mauritius, the brilliant sky, and the deep purple of the surrounding seas. An orchestra of a few instruments, but those first rate, alternately soothed and excited the most excitable of all audiences. Even the negro-dances at the commencement of the little drama, were performed by some of the most favourite *ballerine* of the Académie. Yet every eye still looked for the appearance of the two stars of the night.

Talma's *entrée* was received with unbounded plaudits. Yet he was so simply dressed, and looked so completely the young wanderer of the cane-groves, that I should never have conceived him to be the grand pillar of tragedy in France. He was simply the handsome peasant of the tropics ; yet, as his part advanced, I could discover in his deep eye and powerful tone, the actor capable of reaching the heights of dramatic passion. He was scarcely above the middle size, with features whose magic consisted in their flexibility. I have never seen a countenance

so capable of change as Talma's, and in which the change was so instantaneous, and so total. From the most sportive openness, a word threw it into the most indignant storm, or the most incurable despair. From wild joy, it was suddenly clouded with a weight of sorrow that "refused to be comforted." His accents were singularly sweet, yet clear; and, like his change of countenance, capable of the most rapid change from cheerfulness to the agonies of a breaking heart. The charm of this great performer was reality;—the power to carry away the audience with him into the scene of the moment. I had not been five minutes looking at him, when I was as completely in the Mauritius, as if I had been basking in its golden sunshine, and imbibing the breeze from its fan-palms.

But his fascination and ours was complete, when Virginie appeared. Nothing could be less artificial than her costume; the simple dress of Bengalese blue cloth, a few cowrie shells round her neck, and a shell comb fastening up the braids of a profusion of raven hair. She came floating, rather than walking, down the mountain path; and her first few words, when Paul rushed forward, and knelt to kiss her feet; and the half playful, half fond, air with which she repelled him, seemed to me the most exquisite of all performances. I observed, too, that her style had more nature in it, than even Talma's. I had till then forgotten that he was an actor; but, placed beside her, I could have almost instinctively pronounced, that Paul was a Frenchman, and Virginie a Creole. I whispered the remark to Elnathan, who

answered, "that I was right in point of fact ; for the representative of Virginie, though not a native of the Mauritius, was of tropical birth—the widow of a French noble, who had married her in the colonies, and who had been one of the victims of the Revolution."

"And yet, an amateur actress?"

"Yes ; but we never ask such questions in France. Everybody does the same. You should see one of our 'bals à la victime,' in which the express qualification for a ticket is, having lost a relative by the guillotine."

"But, who is this charming woman?"

"A woman of birth and fortune, and supposed, at this moment, to exercise the highest influence, with the most influential personage of the government ;—even the bewitching Madame de Fontenai has given way to her supremacy."

I observed, "That though neither could compete with English beauty in point of features ; there was a singular fascination in both—their countenances seemed remarkably connected with the play of their minds."

"There is still a distinction," said Elnathan, after a long and calm look through his *lorgnette*—in the style of that inspection which an artist might give to a picture of acknowledged renown ; or perhaps, which a Mahometan dealer might fix on an importation from Circassia ; "yet, one, which," said he, dropping his glass, "I find it difficult to define."

"You have already," said I, "given Madame Roland her place at the head of Republicans,—let us

suppose Madame de Fontenai the fine and fastidious aristocrat.—While this lovely being's elegance of manner, and mixture of grace and dignity, would make an admirable figure at the head of a French court ; if such a thing were not now beyond all possibility."

"Are you aware," said the Jew, with sudden seriousness, "that a prediction, or at least some extraordinary conjecture, on the subject, has gone the round of the circles ? The tale is, that while she was still a child, in the West Indies, one of the negro dispensers of fortune, an Obi woman, pronounced that she should ascend a throne. I must, however, add the *finale*, to qualify it—that she should die in an hospital."

"The scale," said I, "goes down too suddenly, in that case : she had better remain the beautiful and happy creature that she is.—Yet a being, formed in that expressive mould, was surely not meant either to live or die, like the rest of the world."

"True ; in other countries," said Elnathan, with a glance round, as if a *huissier* was at his elbow ; "but here, the affair is different—or rather, the course of nature is the scaffold. That beautiful woman has lately had the narrowest escape from the Revolutionary committee ; and I can tell you, that it is utterly impossible to know what to-morrow may bring even to her.—She is too lovely not to be an object of rivalry ; and a word may be death."

Such was my first sight of Josephine de Beauharnais.

This charming performance proceeded with in-

finite interest. But it differed from the course, which I have since seen it take. The scene next showed Virginie in France. She was in the midst of all the animation of Parisian life—no longer the simple and exquisite child of nature, but the conscious beauty ; still in all the bloom of girlhood, but exhibiting the graces of the woman of fashion. Surrounded by the admiration and adulation of the glittering world, she had given herself up to its influence, until her early feelings were beginning to fade away.

The scene opened with a ball. Virginie, dressed in the perfection of Parisian taste, was floating down the dance, radiant with jewels and joy, the very image of delight ; when her eye dropped upon the figure of a stranger, standing in a recess of the superb apartment, with arms folded, a moody brow, and a burning gaze fixed upon her. A pang shot through her heart. In her exquisite acting, a single gesture, a single glance, showed that all the recollections of her native isle had returned.—She was the child of nature and of sensibility once more. She tottered from the dance, tremblingly approached the stranger, and fell at his feet. That stranger was Paul ; and Talma, in his finest tragedy, never displayed more profound emotion, nor produced more enthusiastic applause, than when he raised her up, and with one look, and one word, “ Virginie,”—forgot all and forgave all.

But we were spared the catastrophe ; which would certainly have been but an ill return for the profusion of soft sorrows, and ardent applauses, which the fair

spectators gave to the performance. The ruling genius of the night, the minister's wife, to do honour to the triumphs of the State; had employed the talents of her *décorateurs* actively, during our stay at the supper-table; and when the curtain rose for the third act, instead of "a stormy sea and the horrors of shipwreck," according to the stage direction; we saw a stage Olympus, in which the whole *élite* of the Celestials escorted a formidable Bellona-like figure, the cuirassed and helmed Republic, to an altar covered with laurels, and flaming with incense, inscribed "*à la Liberté.*" Some stanzas, more remarkable for their patriotism than their poetry, were chanted by Minerva, Juno, and the rest of the Olympians, IN HONOUR of the "jour magnifique de victoire, Jemappes." A train of *figurantes!* the monarchies of Europe!—came forward, dancing, and depositing their crowns and sceptres at the foot of the altar, (a sign, at least, tolerably significant;) the whole, concluding with an exhibition of the bust of Dumourier, on which Madame laid a chaplet of laurel, accompanied with a speech in the highest republican style—bust, speech, and Madame, being all alike received with true Gallic rapture.

On that night, to have doubted the "irresistible, universal, and perpetual" triumph of the Republic, would have been high-treason to taste, to hospitality, and the ladies; and, for that night, our belief was unbounded. All made up their minds, that a new era of human felicity had arrived; that "all the world was a stage," in the most dancing and delight-

ful sense of the words ; and that feasting and *fêtes* were to form the staple of life, for every future age. We were to live in a laurel—a rosebud world. I heard round me in a thousand whispers, from some of the softest politicians that ever wore a smile, the assurance, that France was to become a political Arcadia, or rather an original Paradise, in which toil and sorrow had no permission to be seen. In short, the world, from that hour forth, was to be changed ; despotism was extinguished ; man was regenerated ; balls and suppers were to be the only rivalry of nations ; Paris was, of course, to lead France ; France, of course, to lead the globe ;—all was to be beauty, *bonhommie*, and *bonbons* !—Under the shade of the triumphant tricolor, all nations were to waltz, make epigrams, and embrace for ever !

CHAPTER XXV.

“ Oh, how comely it is, and how reviving,
To the spirits of just men long oppressed,
When Heaven into the hands of their deliverer
Puts invincible might,
To quell the mighty of the earth, the oppressor,
The brute and boisterous force of violent men,
Hardy and industrious to support
Tyrannic power ; but raging to pursue
The righteous, and all such as honour truth.
Hell their ammunition,
And feats of war defeats
With plain, heroic magnitude of mind.”

MILTON.

ELNATHAN was a man of many cares, and of every kind of wisdom, but one—the wisdom of knowing when he had wealth enough. He evidently loved accumulation ; and the result was, that every hour of his existence was one of alarm. Half the bankers of France were already in prison ; and yet he carried on the perilous game of commerce. He was known to be immensely opulent ; and he must have regarded the day which passed over his head, without seeing his strong boxes put under the government seal, and himself thrown into some *oubliette*, as a sort of

miracle. But he was now assailed by a new alarm. War with England began to be rumoured among the bearded brethren of the synagogue ; and Elnathan had ships on every sea, from Peru to Japan. Like Shakspeare's princely merchant—

“ His mind was tossing on the ocean,
There, where his argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors, and rich burghers of the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Did overpower the petty traffickers,
As they flew by them with their woven wings.”

The first shot fired would inevitably pour out the whole naval force of England ; and his argosies would put their helms about, and steer for Portsmouth, Plymouth, and every port, but a French one. If this formidable intelligence had awakened even the haughtiness of the French government to a sense of public peril, what effect must it not have in the counting-house of a man whose existence was trade ? While I was on my pillow, luxuriating in dreams of French *fêtes*, Paul and Virginie carried off to the clouds, and Parisian *belles* dancing cotillons in the bowers of a Mahometan paradise ; Elnathan spent the night at his desk, surrounded by his bustling generation of clerks, writing to correspondents at every point of the compass, and preparing insurances with the great London establishments ; which I was to carry with me, though unacquainted with the transaction on which so many millions of francs hung trembling.

We parted. The postillions cracked their whips, the little Norman horses tore their way over the

rough pavement; the sovereign people scattered off on every side, to save their lives and limbs; and the plain of St. Denis, rich with golden corn, and tracked by lines of stately trees, opened far and wide before me. From the first ascent I gave a *parting* glance to Paris, mingled of rejoicing and regret. What hours of interest, of novelty, and of terror, had I not passed within the circuit of those walls! Yet, how the eye cheats reality! that city of imprisonment and frantic liberty, of royal sorrow and cruel popular exultation, now looked a vast circle of calm and stately beauty. How delusive is distance in every thing! Across that plain, surrounded with those soft hills, and glittering in the purple of this glorious evening, it looked a paradise.—I knew it to be a pandemonium!

I speeded on; every thing was animated and animating in my journey. It was the finest season of the year; the roads were good; the prospects—as I swept valley and rushed round hill, with the insolent speed of a government *employé*, leaving all meaner vehicles, travellers, and the whole workday world behind—seemed to me to redeem the monotonous character of French landscape. But, how much of its colouring was my own! Was *I* not *free*? was I not *returning to England*? was I not approaching scenes, and forms, and the realities, of those recollections, which, even in the field of battle, and at the foot of the scaffold, had alternately cheered and pained, delighted and distressed me?—yet which, even with all their anxieties, were dearer than the most gilded hopes of ambition. Was I not about to meet the gay smile and poignant vivacity of Mariamne? was I not about

to wander in the shades of my paternal castle? to see those relatives, who were to shape so large a share of my future happiness; to meet in public life the eminent public men, with whose renown the courts, and even the camps of Europe were already ringing: and last, proudest, and most profound feeling of all—was I not to venture near the shrine, on which I had placed my idol; to offer her the solemn and distant homage of the heart; perhaps to hear of her from day to day; perhaps to see her noble beauty; perhaps even to *hear* that voice, of which the simplest accents sank into my soul?—But I must not attempt to describe sensations which are in their nature beyond language; which dispose the spirit of man to silence; and which, in their truth and intensity, suffer but one faculty to exist, absorbing all the rest in deep and delicious reverie.

I drove, with the haste of a courier, to London; and after having deposited my despatches with one of the under-secretaries of the Foreign-office, I flew to Mordecai's den in the city. London appeared to me more crowded than ever; the streets longer, the buildings dingier; and the whole, seen after the smokeless and light-coloured towns of the Continent, looked an enormous manufactory, where men wore themselves out in perpetual dimness and bustle, to make their bread, and die. But my heart beat quickly, as I reached the door of that dingiest of all its dwellings, where the lord of hundreds of thousands of pounds burrowed himself from the eyes of mankind.

I knocked, but was long unanswered; at last a meagre clerk, evidently of the “fallen people,” and

who seemed dug up from the depths of the dungeon, gave me the intelligence that "his master and family had left England." The answer was like an ice-bolt through my frame. This was the moment to which I had looked forward with, I shall not say, what emotions. I could scarcely define them; but they had a share of every strong, every faithful, and every touching remembrance in my nature. My disappointment was a pang. My head grew dizzy, I reeled; and asked leave to enter the gloomy door, and rest for a moment. But this the guardian of the den was too cautious to allow; and I should have probably fainted in the street, but for the appearance of an ancient Rebecca, the wife of the clerk, who, feeling the compassion which belongs to the sex in all instances, and exerting the authority which is so generally claimed by the better-halves of men; pushed her husband back, and led the way into the old cobwebbed parlour.

A glass of water, the sole hospitality of the house, revived me; and after some enquiries alike fruitless with the past, I was about to take my leave, when the clerk, in his removal of some papers, not to be trusted within reach of a stranger, dropped a letter from the bundle, on which was my name. From its variety of addresses, it had evidently travelled far, and had been returned from half the post-offices of the Continent. It was two months' old, but it was from Mordecai; and after alluding to some pecuniary transactions with his foreign brethren, always the first topic, it hurried on in his usual abrupt strain:—"Mariamne has in-

sisted on my leaving England, for a while. This is perplexing ; as the war must produce a new loan, and London is, after all, the only place where those affairs can be transacted without trouble.—My child is well, and yet, she looks pallid from time to time, and sheds tears, when she thinks herself unobserved. All this may pass away, but it makes me uneasy ; and, as she has evidently made up her mind to travel, I have only to give way—for, with all her caprices, she is my child, my only and my beloved child.

“I have heard a good deal of your proceedings, from my kinsman in Paris. You have acquitted yourself well, and it shall not be unknown in the quarter where it may be of most service to you.—I have been stopped by Mariamne’s singing in the next room, and her voice has almost unmanned me ; she is melancholy of late, and her only music now is taken from those ancestral hymns which our nation regard as the songs of the Captivity. Her tones at this moment are painfully touching, and I have been forced to lay down my pen, for she has melted me to tears. Yet her colour has not altogether faded lately, and I think sometimes that her eyes look brighter than ever!—Heaven help me, if I should lose her. I should then be indeed alone.

“You may rely on my intelligence—a war is *inevitable*. You may also rely on my conjecture ; that it will be the most desperate war which Europe has seen.—One that will break up *foundations*, as well as break down superstructures ; not a war of politics, but of principles ; not a war for conquest, but for ruin.—All the treasuries of Europe will be

bankrupt within a twelvemonth of its commencement; unless England shall become their banker. This will be the harvest of the men of money.—It is unfortunate that your money is all lodged for your commission; otherwise, in the course of a few operations, you might make cent. per cent., which I propose to do.—*Apropos* of commissions. I had nearly omitted, in my own family anxieties, to mention the object for which I began my letter. I have *failed* in arranging the affair of your commission! This was not for want of zeal. But the prospect of a war has deranged and inflamed every thing. The young nobility have besieged the Horse-guards. All the weight of the aristocracy has pressed upon the minister, and private influence has been driven from the field: the spirit is too gallant a one to be blamed. But why shall a man of your sense be dependent on a single cast of the die? Think of my suggestion. Are there not a hundred other pursuits, in which an intelligent mind, like your own, might follow fortune? You have seen enough of campaigning to know, that it is not all a flourish of trumpets; has the world but one gate, and that the Horse-guards?—If my personal judgment were to be asked, I should feel no regret for a disappointment which may have come, only to turn your knowledge and ability to purposes not less suitable to an active spirit, nor less likely to produce a powerful impression on the world—the only thing, after all, worth living for! You may laugh at this language from a man of my country, and my trade. But even *I* have my ambition; and you may yet discover it to be not

less bold, than if I carried the lamp of Gideon, or wielded the sword of the Maccabee.—I must stop again; my poor restless child is coming into the room at this moment, complaining of the cold, in one of the finest days of summer. She says, that this villa has grown sunless, airless, and comfortless. Finding that I am writing to you, she sends her best wishes; and bids me ask, ‘what is the fashionable colour for mantles in Paris,’ and also ‘what is become of that “wandering creature, Lafontaine,”’ if you should happen to recollect such a personage.”

“P. S.—My daughter insists on our setting out from Brighton to-morrow, and crossing the Channel the day after. She has a whim for revisiting Switzerland; and in the mean time begs that if, during our absence, “*you* should have a whim for sea air and solitude, you may make of the villa any use you please.—Yours sincerely.”

After reading this strange and broken letter, I was almost glad, that I had not seen Mariamne. Lafontaine was in her heart still, in spite of absence. At this I did not wonder, for the heart of woman, when once struck, is almost incapable of change: but the suspense was killing her; and I had no doubt, that her loss would sink even her strong-headed parent to the grave. Yet, what tidings had I to give? Whether her young soldier was shot in the attempt to escape from the St. Lazare, or thrown into some of those hideous dungeons, where so many thousands were dying in misery from day to day, was entirely beyond my power to tell. It was surely better, that she should be roving over the bright

hills, and breathing the fresh breezes, of Switzerland, than listening to my hopeless conjectures at home; trying to reconcile herself to all the chances which passion is so painfully ingenious in creating; and dying, like a flower in all its beauty, on the spot where it had grown.

But, the letter contained nothing of the *one* name, for which my first glance had looked over every line with breathless anxiety. There was not a syllable of Clotilde! The father's cares had absorbed all other thoughts; and the letter was to me a blank in that knowledge for which I panted, as the hart pants for the fountains. Still, I was not dead to the calls of friendship; and that night's mail carried a long epistle to Mordecai, detailing my escapes, and the services of his kindred in France; and for Mariamne's ear, all that I could conceive cheering, in my hopes of that "wandering creature, Lafontaine."

But I was now forced to think of sterner subjects. I had arrived in England at a time of the most extraordinary public excitement. Every man felt, that some great trial of England and of Europe was at hand; though none could distinctly define either its nature or its cause. France, which had then begun to pour out her furious declamations against this country, was, of course, generally looked to as the quarter from which the storm was to come; but the higher minds evidently contemplated hazards nearer home. Affiliated societies, corresponding clubs, and all the revolutionary apparatus, from whose crush and clamour I had so lately emerged, met the ear and the eye on all occasions; and the fiery ferocity

of French rebellion was nearly rivalled by the grave insolence of English "Rights of Man." But, I am not about to write the history of a national fever. The Republicanism, which Cicero and Plutarch instil into us all, had been extinguished in me by the squalid realities of France. I had seen the dissecting-room, and was cured of my love for the science. My spirit, too, required rest. I could have exclaimed, with all the sincerity, and with all the weariness too, of the poet :—

" Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more !"

But, perhaps fortunately for my understanding, if not for my life, I was not suffered to take refuge in the wilderness. London was round me ; rich and beggared, splendid and sullen, busy and idle London.—I was floating on those waves of human being, in which the struggler must make for the shore, or sink.—I was in the centre of that huge whispering gallery, where every sound of earth was echoed and re-echoed with new power ; and where it was impossible to dream. My days too were spent in communication with government, and a large portion of my nights was employed in carrying on those correspondences, which, though seldom known in the routine of Downing Street, formed the essential part of its intercourse with the continental cabinets.

But, a period of the deepest suspense remained. Parliament had been summoned for the 13th of De-

cember. Nearly to the last moment, the cabinet had been kept in uncertainty as to the actual intent of France. There had been declamation in abundance in the French legislature and the journals ; but, with this unsubstantial evidence, the cabinet could not meet the country. Couriers had been sent in all directions ; boats were stationed along the coast, to bring the first intelligence of actual hostilities ; every conceivable expedient was adopted ; but all in vain. The day of opening the Session was now within twenty-four hours. At length, after lingering, in expectancy of the arrival of despatches from our ambassador at the Hague, I offered to cross the sea in the first fishing-boat which I could find, and ascertain the facts. My offer was accepted ; and in the twilight of a winter's morning, and in the midst of a snow-storm, I was making my shivering way homeward through the wretched lanes which, dark as pitch and narrow as footpaths, then led to the centre of the diplomatic world ; when, in my haste, I nearly overset a meagre figure, which, half-blinded by the storm, was tottering towards the Foreign-office. After a growl, in the most angry jargon, the man recognized me ; he was the clerk whom I had seen at Mordecai's house. He had, but an hour before, received, by one of the private couriers of the firm, a letter, with orders to deliver it with all expedition. He put it into my hand : it was from Elnathan, and was simply in these words :—"My kinsman and your friend has desired me, to forward to you the earliest intelligence of hostilities.—I send you a copy of the bulletin which will be issued at

noon, this day. It is yet unknown ; but I have it from a source on which you may perfectly rely. Of this, make what use you think advantageous. Your well-wisher."

With what pangs the great money-trafficker must have consigned to my use a piece of intelligence, which must have been a mine of wealth to the man who carried it first to the Stock Exchange, I could easily conjecture. But I saw in it the powerful pressure of Mordecai, which none of his tribe seemed to have the means of resisting. My sensations were singular, as I traced my way up the dark and lumbering staircase of the Foreign office ; with the consciousness that, if I had chosen to turn my steps in another direction, I might, before night, be master of thousands, or hundreds of thousands. But, it is only due to the sense of honour which had been impressed on me, even in the riot and roughness of my Eton days, to say, that I did not hesitate for a moment. Sending one of the attendants to arouse the chief clerk, I stood waiting his arrival, with the bulletin unopened in my hands.—But the official had gone to his house in the country, and might not return for some hours. My perplexity increased. Every moment might supersede the value of my intelligence. At length a twinkling light through the chinks of one of the dilapidated doors, told me, that there was some one within ; from whom I might, at least, ask when and how ministers were to be approached. I knocked, the door was opened, and, to my surprise, I found that the occupant of the chamber was one of the most influential members of administration. The

fire had sunk to embers, the lamp was dull, and the hearer was half frozen, and half asleep. But, no sooner had he cast his eyes upon my mysterious despatch, than all his faculties were in full activity.

"This," said he, "is the most important paper that has reached this country, since the taking of the Bastile. *THE SCHELDT IS OPENED!* This act involves an attack on Holland; the defence of our ally is a matter of treaty, and we must arm without delay. The war is begun, but where it shall end"—he paused, and fixing his eyes above, with a solemnity of expression which I scarcely expected to find in the hard-lined countenance, "or who shall live to see its close—who can tell?"

"We have been waiting," added he, "for this intelligence, from week to week, with the fullest expectation that it would come; and yet, when it has come, it strikes one like a thunder-clap.—This is the third night that I have sat at this table, unable to go to rest. You see, sir, that our life is, at least, not the bed of roses for which the world is so apt to give us credit. It is like the life of my own hills—the higher the sheiling, the rougher the blast."

I still honour the memory of this remarkable man. He was a Scot, and with all the best characteristics of his country. I had heard him in Parliament, where he was the most powerful second of the most powerful minister that England had seen. But, if all men were inferior to the premier in majesty and fulness of conception, the man to whom I now listened had no superior in readiness of retort, or

aptness of illustration—in that mixture of sport and satire, of easy jest and subtle sarcasm, which forms the happiest talent for the general uses of debate. If Pitt moved like the armed man of chivalry, or rather, like the main body of the battle—for never was man more entitled to the appellation of a “host in himself”—never were front, flanks, and rear of the host covered by a more quick-witted and indefatigable auxiliary. He was a man of family, and brought with him into public life not the manners of a menial of office, but the bearing of a gentleman. Birth and blood were in his bold and manly countenance; and I could have felt no difficulty in conceiving him, if his course had followed his nature, the chieftain on his hills, at the head of his gallant retainers, pursuing the wild sports of his romantic region; or in some foreign land, gathering the laurels, which the Scotch soldier has so often and so gallantly added to the honours of the empire.

He was perfectly familiar with the great question of the time, and saw the bearings of my news at once. “This paper,” said he, “announces the fact, that a French squadron has actually sailed up the Scheldt, to attack Antwerp. Yet, it is not ten years, since France protested against the same act by Austria, as a violation of the rights of Holland. The new aggression, is, therefore, not simply a solitary violence, but a systematic fraud; not merely the breach of an individual treaty, but a declaration that no treaty is henceforth to be held binding;—it is more than an act of rapine; it is an universal dissolution of the

principles by which society is held together.—In what times are we about to live?”

My remark was simply, “That it depended on the spirit of England herself, whether the conflict was to be followed by honour or by shame; that she had a glorious career before her, if she had magnanimity sufficient to take the part marked out for her by circumstances; and that, with the championship of the world in her hands, even defeat would have the nature of a triumph.”

He now turned the conversation to myself; spoke with more than official civility of my services, and peculiarly of the immediate one; and asked, in what branch of diplomacy I desired advancement?

My answer was prompt. “In none. I desired promotion but in one way—the army.” I then briefly stated the accidental loss of my original appointment; and received, before I left the chamber, a note for the Secretary at war, recommending me, in the strongest terms, for a commission in the Guards.

The world was now before me, and the world in the most vivid, various, and dazzling shape; in the boldest developement of grandeur, terror, and wild vicissitude, which it exhibited for a thousand years—ENGLAND WAS AT WAR!

There is no sight on earth more magnificent, or more awful, than a great nation going to war. I saw the scene in its highest point of view, by seeing it in England. The perfect freedom of the country, its infinite, and constantly conflicting, variety of opinion; its passionate excitement, and its stupendous power,

gave the crisis a character of interest, grandeur, and indefinite but vast purposes, unexampled in any other time, or in any other country. When one of the Continental monarchies commenced war, the operation, however large and formidable, was simple. A monarch resolved; a council sat, less to guide than to echo his resolution; an army marched, invaded the enemy's territory, fought a battle—perhaps a dubious one—rested on its arms; and while *Te Deum* was sung in both capitals alike, for the “victory” of neither, the ministers of both were constructing an armistice, a negotiation, and a peace—each and all to be null and void, on the first opportunity.

But the war of England was a war of the people—a war of wrath and indignation—a war of civilized society, entrusted to a single championship—a great effort of human nature to discharge, in the shape of blood, a disease which was sapping the vitals of Europe; or in a still higher, and therefore a more faithful conception, the gathering of a tempest, which, after sweeping France in its fury, was to restore the exhausted soil and blasted vegetation of society throughout the Continent; and in whose wildest hour, England, serene and undismayed, was to

“ Ride in the whirlwind, and direct the storm.”

I shall acknowledge, that I looked upon the coming conflict with mingled alarm and rejoicing. For the latter feeling, perhaps I ought to make some apology; but I was young, ardent, and ambitious. My place in life was unfixed; standing in that unhappy, middle position, in which stands a man of birth, too

high to suffer his adoption of the humbler means of existence, and yet of resources too inadequate to sustain him without bold and indefatigable exertion;— I felt a very inferior degree of compunction, at the crisis which offered to give me at least a chance of being seen, known, and understood, among men. I felt, like the sailor whose bark was becalmed, and who saw the storm lifting the surges that were to carry him along with them; or like the traveller in an earthquake, who saw the ground swallowing up the river which had hitherto presented an impassable obstacle—distant cities and mountains might sink, before the concussion had done its irresistible will, but, at all events, it had cleared his way.

In thoughts like those, rash and unconnected as they were, I spent many a restless day, and still more restless night. I often sprang from a pillow which, if I had lived in the days of witchcraft, I should have thought spelled to refuse me sleep; and walking for hours about my chamber, endeavoured to reduce into shape the speculations, which filled my mind with splendours and catastrophes worthy of oriental dreams. Yet, why did I not then pursue the career, in which I had begun the world? Why not devote myself to diplomacy? For this I had two reasons. The first—and, let me confess, the most imperious—was, that my pride had been deeply hurt by the loss of my commission. I felt that I had not only been deprived of a noble profession, accidental as was the loss; but that I had subjected myself to the trivial, yet stinging remarks, which never fail to find an obnoxious cause for every failure. While this cloud hung over me, I

was determined, *never* to return to my father's house. Good-natured as the friends of my family might be, I was fully aware of the style in which misfortune is treated, in the idleness of country life; and the Honourable Mr. Marston's loss of his rank in his Majesty's guards, or his preference of a more pacific promotion, was too tempting a topic, to lose any of its stimulants, in the popular ignorance of the true transaction.

My next reason was, that my mind was harassed and wearied by disappointment, until I should not have regretted to terminate the struggle in the first field of battle. The only woman whom I loved, and whom, with the usual frenzy of passion, I solemnly believed to be the only woman on earth deserving to be so loved, had vanished from my most anxious enquiry. The only woman whom I regarded as a friend, was in another country, probably dying. If I could have returned to Mortimer Castle—which I had already determined to be impossible—I should have found only a callous, perhaps a contemptuous, head of the family, angry at my return to burden him. Even Vincent—my old and kind-hearted friend Vincent—had been a soldier; and though I was sure of never receiving a reproach from his wise and gentle lips; was I equally sure that I could escape the flash, or the sorrow, of his eye?

In thoughts like those, and they were dangerous ones, I made many a solitary rush out into the wild winds and beating snows of the winter, which had set in early, and been remarkably severe; walking, often bareheaded, in the most lonely places of the suburbs,

stripping my bosom to the blast, and longing for its tenfold chill, to assuage the fever which burned within me. I had also found the old delay, at the Horse-guards. The feelings of this period make me look with infinite compassion, on the unhappy beings who take their lives into their own hands, and who extinguish all their earthly anxieties, at a plunge. But, I had imbibed principles, of a firmer substance, and but upon one occasion, and one alone, felt tempted to an act of despair.

Taking my lonely dinner in a tavern of the suburbs, the waiter handed me a newspaper, which he had rescued for my behoof from the hands of a group, eager, as all the world then was, for French intelligence. My eye rambled into the "fashionable column;" and the first paragraph, headed "Marriage in high life," announced that, on the morrow, were to be solemnized "the nuptials of Clotilde, Countess de Tourville, with the Marquis de Montrecour, colonel of the French Mousquetaires," &c. The paper dropped from my hands. I rushed out of the house; and, scarcely knowing where I went, I hurried on, until I found myself out of the sight or sound of mortal.

The night was utter darkness; there was no lamp near; the wind roared; and it was only by the flash of the foam that I discovered the broad sheet of water before me. I had strayed into Hyde Park, and was on the bank of the Serpentine.—With what ease might I not there finish all! Life was a burden, thought was a torment, the light of day a loathing.—But the paroxysm soon gave way. Impres-

sions of the duty of human nature, made in earlier years, revived within me with a singular freshness and force. Tears gushed from my eyes, fast and flowing; and, with a long-forgotten prayer for patience, I turned from the place of temptation.

As I reached the streets once more, I heard the trumpets of the Life Guards, and the band of a battalion returning to their quarters. They had been lining the streets, for the king's procession to open the sitting of Parliament. This was the 13th of December—the memorable day to which every heart in Europe was more or less vibrating; yet which I had totally forgotten.—What is man but an electrical machine after all? The sound and sight of soldiership restored me. The machine required only to be touched, to shoot out its latent sparks; and, with a new spirit and a new determination kindling through every fibre, I hastened to be present at that high debate, which was to be the judgment of nations.

My official intercourse with ministers had given me some privileges, and I obtained a seat under the gallery; that part of the House of Commons which is occasionally allotted to strangers of a certain rank. The house was crowded, and every countenance was marked with solemn anxiety. Grey, Sheridan, and other distinguished names of party, had already taken their seats; but the great heads of Government and Opposition were still absent. At length, a buzz among the crowd who filled the floor; and the name of Fox, repeated in every tone of congratulation, announced the pre-eminent orator of Eng-

land. I now saw Fox for the first time ; and I was instantly struck with the singular similitude of all that I saw of him, to all that I had conceived from his character and his style. In the broad bold forehead, it could not be difficult to discover, the strong sense—in the relaxed mouth, the self-indulgent and reckless enjoyment—in the quick, small eye under those magnificent black brows, the man of sagacity, of sarcasm, and of humour ;—and in the grand contour of a countenance and head, which might have been sculptured to take its place among the sages and sovereigns of antiquity ; the living proof of those extraordinary powers, which could have been checked in their ascent to the highest elevation of public life, only by prejudices and passions not less extraordinary. As he advanced up the house, he recognised nearly every one on both sides, and spoke or smiled to them all. The business of the night was not yet begun ; the Speaker was occupied with some matters of routine ; and Fox stopped several times on his way ; and was surrounded by a circle with whom, as I might judge from their laughter, he exchanged some pleasantry of the hour. When at length he arrived at the seat reserved for him, he threw himself upon it, with the easy look of a man who had reached home—gave a nod to Windham, held out a finger to Grey, warmly shook hands with Sheridan ; and then, opening his well-known blue and buff costume, threw himself back on the bench, and laughingly gasped for air.

But, another movement of the crowd at the bar, announced another arrival ; and Pitt entered the

house. His look and movement were equally characteristic with those of his great rival. He looked to neither the right nor the left; replied to the salutations of his friends by the slightest possible bow; neither spoke nor smiled; but, advancing, with a measured step, and remarkably erect figure, took his seat in total silence. The speaker now read the king's speech, and, calling on "Mr. Pitt," the minister rose. I have for that rising but one description—the one which filled my mind at the moment, from the noblest poet of the world.

" Deep on his front engraven,
Deliberation sat, and public care.
Sage he stood,
With Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies. His look
Drew audience and attention, still as night,
Or summer's noontide air."

CHAPTER XXVI.

“ This was the noblest Roman of them all.

* * * * *

He, only, in a general honest thought,
And common good to all, made one of them.
His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up,
And say to all the world, This was a MAN.”

SHAKESPEARE.

I HAD been familiar with the debates of the French Convention, and had witnessed French eloquence in its highest exertions. I had listened to some of their public speakers, with strong interest, but it was only while they were confined to detail. No man tells a story better than a French *conteur*. There lies the natural talent of the people. Nothing can be happier than their seizure of slight circumstances, of the passing colours of events, and of those transient thoughts which make a story as pretty as a piece of ladies' embroidery—a tasteful display of trivial difficulties gracefully surmounted. But, even in their ablest speakers I could perceive a constant dissatisfaction with themselves, unless they happened to produce some of those startling conceptions, which roused their auditory to a stare, a start, or a clapping of hands. I had seen even,

Mirabeau, with all his conscious talent, look round in despair, for applause ; as a sailor thrown overboard, might look for a buoy ; I had seen him as much exhausted, and even overwhelmed, by the want of applause ; as if he had dropped into an exhausted receiver. If some lucky epigram did not come to his rescue, he was undone.

I was now to be the spectator of a different scene. Here too were passion and resentment, the keenness of rivalry and the ardour of triumph ; but here was no affectation. Men spoke, as men speak, when their essential interests are engaged—plainly, boldly, and directly—vigorously often, sometimes vehemently ; but with that general, strong reality, which administers eloquence to even the most untaught orders of mankind, and without which the most decorated eloquence is only the wooden sword of Harlequin.

Pitt took the lead, in all senses of the phrase. On this night, he was magnificent. His exposition of the state of Europe, though perfectly unadorned, had yet an effect upon the House, not unlike that of opening a volume to a multitude who had but just learned to read. All was novelty, conviction, and amazement. His appeal to the principles by which a great people should shape its conduct, had all the freshness and all the strength of feelings drawn, at the moment, from the depths of his own noble bosom ; while his hopes of the victory of England over the temptations to public overthrow, exhibited all the fire, and almost all the sacred conviction, of prophecy.

He described the system of France as “subversion

on principle," its purpose "universal tumult, its instrument remorseless bloodshed, and its triumph a general reduction of society to the wild fury and squalid necessities of the savage state. This," he exclaimed, turning his full front to the House, and raising his hand with the solemnity of an adjuration—"this we *must* resist, in the name of that Omnipotent Disposer, who has given us hearts to feel the blessings of society; or we must acknowledge ourselves unworthy to hold a name among nations! This we must resist—live or die. This anarchy we must meet by order—subtlety by sincerity—intrigue by resolution—treachery by good faith—menace by courage. We must remember, that we have been made trustees of the honour of the past, and of the hopes of the future.—A great country like ours has no alternative, but to join the enemy of all justice, or to protect all justice; to league against all government, or to stand forth its indefatigable and invincible champion.—This is the moment for our decision. Empires are not afforded time for delay. All great questions are simple. Shrink, and you are undone, and Europe is undone along with you; be firm, and you will have saved the world!"

The feelings with which this lofty language was heard were intense. The House listened, in a state of solemn emotion, hour after hour; deeply silent, but when some chord was so powerfully touched, that it gave an universal thrill. Again, those involuntary bursts of admiration were as suddenly hushed, by the eagerness of the House to listen, and the awful importance of the subject. It was not until the great

minister sat down, that the true feeling was truly exhibited; the applause was then unbounded—a succession of thunders.

I had now leisure, to glance at the Opposition. Fox, for a while, seemed good-humouredly inclined to give up the honour of the reply to some of the popular speakers round him; but the occasion was too grave to be intrusted to inferior powers, and, on a general call for his name, he rather reluctantly rose. The world is too familiar with the renown of this celebrated man, to permit me more than a sketch of his style.

Of all the public speakers whom I have ever heard, Fox appeared to me the most subtle—of course, not in the crafty and degrading sense of the word; but in the art of approaching his case; there he was masterly, and matchless.—He loitered, he lingered, he almost trifled by the way, until the observer began to believe, that he had either no object in view, or had forgotten it altogether. In the next moment, he rushed to the assault, and carried all by storm. On this occasion, he had a difficult part to play; for the hourly horrors of the French capital had begun to alienate the aristocracy of England, and had even raised disgust among that most influential body, the middle class. The skill with which the orator glided over this portion of his subject was admirable; no Camilla ever “flew o’er the unbending corn” with a lighter foot. He could not altogether evade the topic. But he treated it, as one might treat the narrative of a distressing casualty; or a disease, only to be touched on by man with the pity due to human infirmity, or even with

the respect due to a dispensation from above. He often paused, seemed at a loss for words, of which, however, he never failed to find the most pungent; and assumed, in a remarkable degree, the appearance of speaking only from strong compulsion, a feeling of reluctant duty, a sense of moral necessity. I here observed his incomparable management; but it was when he had made his way through this difficult performance, that I followed him with unequivocal delight. He had been hitherto Milton's lion, "pawing to get free his hinder parts." He was now let loose, in all his symmetry and power; like the lion, with the forest and the plain before him. "Why has the monarchy of France fallen?" he exclaimed. "Because, like those on whom the malediction of Scripture has been pronounced, it had eyes, yet would not see, and ears, yet would not hear. A new, ardent, and irresistible population was growing up round it year by year, yet it could see nothing beyond its own worn-out circle of nobles, priests, and princes.—In making this war," said he, "you are beginning a contest, of which no man can calculate the means, no man can state the objects, and no man can foresee the end. You are not warring alone against the throne of France, nor even against the people of France; but, you are warring against every people of the earth, which desires to advance its own prosperity, to invigorate its own constitution, or to place itself in that condition of peace, purity, and freedom, which is not more the desire of man, than it is the command of Providence."

The House, following him, with loud applause; he

now burst into reprobation of the names of aristocrat and democrat; which he declared to be mere inventions of party and prejudice. "If you require," exclaimed he, "to make political hostilities immortal, give them names; if you wish to break down the national strength, divide it into factions. If you would not merely overthrow the pillar of the national prosperity, but prevent it from being ever raised again, you have only to crush it into fragments, the deed is then irreparable. Let us then hear no more the names of national division abroad, reinforced and envenomed by the folly of our country. Arm against your enemy, if you will; but here you would arm one hand against the other."

To the charge of defending the French mob, his answer was in the most prompt and daring style.

"Who are the French mob? The French nation.—Dare you put eight-and-twenty millions of men into your bill of attainder? No indictment ever drawn by the hand of man is broad enough for it. Impeach a nation, and you impeach the Providence that made it. Impeach a nation, and you are impeaching only your own rashness and presumption. You are impeaching even the unhappy monarch, whom you profess to defend. Man every where is the creature of circumstances. Nations are only what their governments make them.—But, France is in a state of revolt. Be it so. I demand, what nation ever revolted against justice, truth, and honour? You might as well tell me, that they rebelled against the light of heaven; that they rejected the fruits of the earth; that they refused to breathe

the air.—Men do not war against their natural benefactors ; they are not mad enough, to repel the very instincts of preservation. I pronounce fearlessly, that no nation ever rose, or ever will rise, against a sincere, rational, and benevolent authority. No nation was ever born blind. Infatuation is not a law of human nature. The monarchy of France was the criminal.” This was sophistry, but it was skilfully suited to the time.

Another burst, which produced vast effect on the House, referred to the exclusiveness of the chief public employments.

“The people have overthrown the titles and dignities of France. I admit it. But, was it from a natural hatred of those distinctions? That I deny. They are congenial to the heart of man. The national hatred lay, in the sense of that intolerable injustice, which turns honour into shame. For centuries, those titles and dignities were to the people not badges of honour, but brands of scorn. They were not public calls to generous emulation, but royal proclamations of everlasting contempt. They were not ramparts, surrounding the state, but barriers, shutting out the people. How would such insults to the common origin of man, to the common powers of the human mind, to the common desire of distinction born with every man, be endured in this country? Is it then to be wondered at, that France should have abolished them by acclamation?”

He now became more daring still, and yet more sophistical; closing with a boldness of figure unusual even to himself.

“I contend, that this was a victory gained, not for a populace, but for a people, for all France, for twenty-eight millions of men—over a portion of society who had lost their rank, a body already sentenced by their personal inefficiency—a caste, who, like a famished garrison, had been starved, by the sterility of the spot in which they had inclosed themselves ; or, like the Indian devotees, had turned themselves into cripples, by their pretence of a sacred superiority to the habits of the rest of mankind.”

Opposition still exhibited its ranks but slightly diminished, and the chief passages of this impassioned appeal, which continued for three hours, were received with all the fervour of party. Burke then rose. Strong interest was directed to him, not merely from his eminent name, but from the public curiosity to hear his explanation of that estrangement, which had been for some time spreading, under his auspices, through the leading personages of the Opposition. Like most men who have made themselves familiar with the works of a great writer, I had formed a portraiture of him by anticipation. I never was more disappointed. Instead of the expressive countenance and commanding figure, which I had imagined, to enshrine the soul of the most splendid of all orators ; I saw a form of the middle size, and of a homely appearance, a heavy physiognomy, and the whole finished by two appurtenances, which would have been fatal to the divinity of the Apollo Belvidere, spectacles and a wig. His voice and manner were scarcely less prepossessing ; the one was as abrupt and clamorous, as the other was

rustic and ungraceful. He had the general look of a farmer of the better order; and seemed, at best, made to figure on a grand jury.

But I soon felt, how trivial are externals, in comparison of genuine ability; or perhaps, how much even their repulsiveness may add to the power of genius. I had listened but a few minutes, when I forgot everything, except that a man of the highest faculties was before me; with those faculties wrought to the highest tension by their subject. Taking a wholly new line of argument, he dwelt as little on the political views of England with Pitt, as he did upon the revolutionary regeneration of France with Fox. His view was exclusively English. "I do not charge," he exclaimed, turning full on the Opposition bench, "individuals with conspiracy; but I charge them with giving the sanction of their name to principles, which have in them all the germs of conspiracy. Sir, the maxim of resisting the beginnings of evil, is as sound in the concerns of nations, as in the morality of individual minds. Nay, I am not sure, whether mischief is not more effectually done in that incipient state, than when the evil comes full-formed. It is less perceived, and it thus destroys with impunity.—The locust, before it gets its wings, destroys the crop with a still more rapacious tooth, than when its armies are loading the wind."

After illustrating his principle, with vast variety of allusion, he touched, in a gentler tone, on the schism of his party. "Honourable members have talked largely of their zeal for the constitution. Sir,

I am content, to follow the wisdom, which judges of the faith by the works. In my humble measure, I have been a zealous worshipper of the constitution. There was a time when those honourable gentlemen and myself—and I speak of that time with the regret due to long friendship—took ‘sweet counsel together,’ and bowed before that common worship as friends. That time is past. We have since taken different paths.—I have been charged with apostasy. But, what is my apostasy? That I have not followed the frenzy and ingratitude of the hour; that, while the most awful event in the history of human change has been transacting before us, I have not shut my ears and eyes to its moral; that I have not followed the throng into the valley, and there joined the fabricators of the new idolatry, the priesthood of the golden calf of revolution; nay, shared the polluted feast and the intoxicated dance; while the thunders of divine vengeance were rolling on the mount above.”

It was obvious from his manner, and his frequent return to the topic, that the charge of desertion had deeply wounded his generous and sensitive nature; and nothing struck me as more characteristic of his faculties, than the unexhausted amplification of defence which seemed to pour into his mind, at every return. But I hasten on.

“In those ranks,” said he, “I fought for nearly the half of that portion of life allotted to man; certainly for that portion of my course, in which the vigour and the applicability of all the best parts of human nature have their fullest play.—I came to it

a volunteer ; I fought side by side with its foremost ; I shared the ‘winter of their discontent,’ as willingly as the summer of their prosperity : I took the buffets of ill fortune, and they were many, with as cheerful a countenance and as unshaken a fidelity, as any man. But, when I saw a new banner raised among them, blazoned with mottoes of evil, and refused to follow, who were the deserters ? They or I ?” As he spoke these words, he drew his otherwise rather stooping form to its full height, lifted his hand above his head, and stood like one at once demanding and defying the investigation of the empire.

The roar of applause which followed, seemed to shake the very walls. He was powerfully moved ; his countenance changed from its usual pallidness to deep suffusion ; and his hands rather tossed, than waved in the air. At last I saw one of them thrust strongly into his bosom, as if the gesture was excited by some powerful recollection. “Do I speak without proof of the public hazards ?” he exclaimed. “I can give you demonstration—I need invoke neither powers above, nor powers below, to enlighten you. I have the oracle within my hand.” The House fixed all its eyes upon him. He dropped his voice, and spoke with a faint, but clear, tone, which formed a remarkable contrast to his usually bold, and even harsh enunciation : “Sir,” said he, in this half-whispered voice, “before I join these gentlemen in their worship, I must know what deity presides in their temple ; I must see that the incense which fumes before its altar, is taken from the sacred repositories of the constitution, not the smuggled

importation of foreign revolt—that pernicious compound of civil mischief and mad metaphysics—which, instead of consummating and purifying the sacrifice, only poisons the air. I must see something of the *hierarch* too, before I join in his aspirations; I must see that he is lawfully inducted into his office, that he is not a rebel in the garb of loyalty—a blasphemer where he professes to pray—a traitor where he propounds allegiance.”

Fox here, evidently taking the description to himself, exhibited palpable signs of displeasure. Burke caught the expression at once, and instantly changed the whole current of his conceptions. “If,” said he, “the honourable gentleman thinks that I designate *him* as the high-priest of this new worship, he does me as much injustice as himself. No, no! When we shall see the Republican Pantheon thrown open, he, and such as he, will not be called to officiate at the altar. He is much more likely to be the victim. The popular ornaments, now flung so lavishly upon him, will more probably be but the decorations for his sacrifice. The chaplet will but bind him to the horns of that abhorred altar, which reeks with so much of the best blood of France.” Here a corpulent noble, peculiarly hostile to Burke, laughed contemptuously. The orator instantly turned upon him. “True,” said he, “there may be a good deal of variety in that procession. There may be the mummer as well as the priest; we may see the mountebank selling his potions, and playing his tricks, as well as the sacrificer with his axe—unless the ambition of the bloated performer should prefer

to combine the offices, and be at once the butcher and the buffoon."

The hit was felt on all sides, and the laughter was unbounded. He then rose, as was his custom, into a higher strain. "I can imagine that procession," said he, "or rather, that triumph, of the principles of change.—Like the return of the classical Bacchus from his Indian conquests, the triumpher," and he now cast a look at Fox, "secure of his supremacy, exulting in his prowess, and thinking the civilized world at his feet; but, not without the companionship of his trusty Silenus"—and here again he turned his glance on the noble lord—"that veteran follower, whose ambition is limited to his cups, and the vigour of whose fidelity is shown only in the constancy of his intoxication;—the whole procession being drawn by the wild lords of the forest and the wilderness, who, harnessed as they may be for the moment, will no sooner find their food stinted, than they will resume the natural instincts of the lion and the tiger, turn on their drivers, and devour them." An universal cheer accompanied the words.

"But, sir," he exclaimed, turning to the chair, "we have higher topics to think of, and to those I now call the attention of the representatives of England. I have alluded to the revolutionary temple. I here have its deity." With those words, he plucked from his bosom a large dagger, held it for a moment up to the light, and then flung it at the foot of the table. The astonishment, and even the alarm, of the whole assembly was beyond description. They started from their seats, as if assassination had stood

before them in a visible shape. Some crowded round Burke, some caught at the dagger, which was eventually carried to the Speaker, and became the object of universal curiosity. All was confusion, for a considerable time. At length Burke, in a few words, delivered in his most impressive tone, explained the phenomenon. "That dagger," said he, "is one of thousands, perhaps of millions, which the preachers of the new philosophy are now forging for popular conviction. You see, that by its construction it is equally fitted for the head of a pike, or for a dagger—equally serviceable for tearing down a monarchy in the field, or stabbing its friends in their chambers. You have it, the emblem at once of rebellion and assassination. Those are the arguments of the new school, those are the instruments by which the limbs of the state are to be amputated, for replacement by the inventions of the revolutionary mechanists. Those are the keys, by which the locks of cabinets and councils are henceforth to be opened, and the secrets of national wealth laid bare to the rapacity of the rabble. You now know the quarter from which your dangers are to come. I deprecate foreign hostility, but I dread civil blood. War may even be essential, to shake society from its stagnation; but all human nature abhors the assassin, who sits beside us, and under the mask of brotherhood, strikes his weapon to the heart."

The debate had been prolonged through the greater part of the night, and yet such was the interest felt in its subject, that the streets in the neighbourhood continued full to the last. All the hotels and coffee-

houses were filled with people waiting for the division. Groups, with lighted torches, were lingering every where, and passing the intelligence along, as members happened casually to make their appearance in the course of the night. Shouts, and expressions of wrath, alternately arose, according to the nature of the intelligence; and a species of open-air legislature was held, during one of the bitterest nights of winter; with discussions as active, though perhaps not altogether so classic, as those within. Public curiosity was roused to its wildest height; every public sentiment had its full expression; and whether the acclamation was louder when, at the breaking up of the House, Fox's corpulent frame was seen toiling its slow way through the pressure; or when Pitt's slender figure and passionless face were recognized, might have perplexed the keenest investigators of popular feeling.

On returning to my chamber, exhausted; yet animated with a new sense of the value of existence in such a country, and of the noble faculties which she carried in her bosom; I saw a large packet on my table. I gazed on its envelope for a few moments, with that strange emotion, which sometimes makes us dread to open the very letter which we most desire to receive.—It was obviously from Downing Street. At last, and tremblingly, I opened it.—It contained my commission in the Guards!

My destiny was now fixed, and it is impossible to tell, how much I felt relieved. I had spent the preceding period in such perplexing indecision, that I felt my

heart withering within me. But, all was now clear. My course was decided. I was in other hands than my own, and whatever might be the result, I was no longer answerable for either good or ill fortune. No human being who has not felt the trial, almost the torment, of being left to decide on the conduct which may make or mar him for life; can conceive the depression into which it plunges the mind. From this I was now rescued; I was wholly free; an established routine, a vigorous profession, a regulated pursuit, and that pursuit one of the most honourable nature, was suddenly prepared for me, by the enclosure upon my table. After again and again reading this simple but expressive document, I threw myself on my bed, and attempted to forget it and the world. But I could forget neither; my eyelids would not close; sleep had gone from me. After a useless effort for composure, I rose, relighted my lamp, and spent the rest of the night in writing to my relatives, to Vincent, to Mordecai, and every one to whom I felt his majesty's sign manual a vindication of my whole career. There was still one cloud, that overhung my prospect, one gloomy and bitter remembrance: but that cloud I had neither the power, nor even the wish to dispel; that remembrance was already a part of my being; to extinguish it was impossible. I resolved to cherish it, as a sacred recollection, to combine it with the aspirations of my new pursuit, and render them thus still nobler; to reserve it, as a treasure inaccessible to the knowledge of mankind; but to which I might return in my hours

of discontent with the world, and restore my sense of the beauty of mind and form, which might still exist, in the shape of human nature.

Yet, it may be justly supposed, that, during the interval of my equipment, I did not limit my feelings to this lonely abstraction. I spent an anxious period, in making enquiries for the Maréchale, in every quarter which offered the slightest probability of discovering her abode. Though I had seen the announcement of Clotilde's approaching marriage in the public journals, I had seen no mention of its having taken place. But my search was wholly unproductive. The captivating duchess, who received me with the kindness which seemed a part of her nature, while she joined in the general admiration of the "young, the lovely, and the accomplished Comtesse," "her dearest of friends," could tell me nothing more, than that she had left London, with the intention of visiting France. There her knowledge ceased. I learned only further, that she had grown singularly fond of solitude, was melancholy, and had no hesitation in expressing the deepest dislike to the marriage proposed by her family. My enquiry was at an end.

Hopeless as this intelligence was, it relieved me from the certainty, which would have been despair. While Clotilde remained unallied to one whom I could not avoid regarding as an uncongenial spirit; there was, at least, the chance of happiness remaining for me. If there should be a war, my regiment would be among the first to be employed, and France would inevitably be the first object of a British expedition. The "march to Paris" had been pro-

claimed by orators, exhibited in theatres, and chanted in street ballads. I was young, ardent, and active. My family name was one known to the table, at which I seated myself on my introduction to the Guards, and I was immediately on the best footing with the gallant young men of a corps which has never suffered a stain. I had even some peculiar sources of favour in their eyes.—I had actually made a campaign. This was more than had been done by any member of the regiment. The Guards, always brave, and always foremost, as they were; had not seen a shot fired, for a quarter of a century. The man who had seen the realities of war on the magnificent scale of continental campaigning, thus possessed a certain superiority. And I had actually learned enough, under the Duke of Brunswick, a master of tactics; to render my services useful, at the moment.

The discipline of the British army was not then, what it has since been, among the most effective in Europe.—It was not then, the “grenadier army.” There was no peculiarly strong reason for the minute toil of foreign discipline, in an army which had never been engaged, since the American War. But, other days were now obviously at hand, and the passion for discipline, and above all others, for the Prussian discipline, became universal. With the exaggeration, common to all popular impulses, the tactics of Frederick were now regarded as the secrets of victory. That great soldier, and most crafty of men, by his private reviews, to which no stranger, even of the highest rank, was ever admitted; and by a series of mystifications, had laboured to produce this impression

upon Europe, and had largely succeeded. Mankind love being cheated; and what the charlatanism of necromancy had effected a thousand years ago, was then effected by the charlatanism of genius. If I, too, had seen the Prussian troops only at Potsdam, I should probably have mistaken the truncheon for a talisman, like the rest of the world. But the field suffers no mystification. I had seen, that the true secret of this great tactician, for such unquestionably he was; consisted in his rejecting the superfluities of service, and retaining the substance; in reducing tactics to the ready application of force; and in simplifying the old and tardy manœuvres of the French and Austrian battalions, to the few expeditious and essential formations required before an enemy in the field.—I was soon offered the adjutancy, and I accepted it rejoicingly.

In those days, by a curious anomaly, which can scarcely be believed in ours, every regiment was practically free to choose its own system of manœuvre. The natural consequence was, that no two regiments executed any one movement alike. Thus, to brigade the army was impossible, and every field-day was a scene of ludicrous confusion. But, the Prussian discipline, which has since been made the basis of the British, was then perfectly new, and it had all the effect of a brilliant novelty. Our parade was constantly crowded with officers of the highest grades, anxious to transmit its practice to their regiments. The king, always attached to German recollections, and who would have made as good a soldier as any of his forefathers, was frequently a spectator; and

the regiment, thus stimulated, rapidly displayed all the completeness and precision of movement which, to this day, makes a review of the Guards the finest military spectacle in Europe.

The adjutant was not forgotten in the general applause. I was promised promotion, in the most gratifying language of royalty itself, and all the glittering prospects of the most glittering of all pursuits opened before me.—I still had my moments of depression. Clotilde often rose before me, like a departed spirit, in the solitude of my chamber. I mentally saw her, in the midst of those sumptuous balls and banquets which the nobility gave in such profusion at this period. When a shape, however faintly resembling her incomparable elegance of form, passed before my eye; or a voice, in the slightest degree reminding me of her touching tones, reached my ear; I felt an irresistible pang, which, for the time, embittered all the scene around me.

But I had in no period of my life, been suffered to linger long in melancholy. One night, on returning from a dinner at H—— House, I found a gentleman in possession of my chamber, with my fire briskly blazing, supper on the table, and every appearance of his having made himself master of the establishment. As I paused at the door; in some surprise at the ease of the proceeding; the intruder turned round, and I saw the face of my old and excellent friend Vincent. I was delighted to take the honest hand of one, who was enough to redeem the character of human nature. He was full of congratulations, and country news. He told me that

this, his first visit to London for years, was simply, to shake hands with his pupil; to hear from him his adventures; and to have the opportunity of seeing his regiment on parade. He had, on that day, enjoyed all his objects together. He had visited our parade. The regiment "reminded him of the grenadiers of Maria Theresa, in the first Hungarian campaign; and all that he wished for me was, that I had seen Daun or Laudohn."

But he had more important topics. By an accidental meeting with an old college friend, high in office, he had ascertained, that an expedition to Holland was resolved on; and that it was to take place without delay.—"Williamstadt was bombarded, and must fall in a few days, if not relieved. With its fall, the Seven Provinces would be thrown open. In this emergency, aid had been solicited from England. An envoy had just arrived, soliciting immediate succours."

Vincent's country news was brief. My lordly brother was in pursuit of a neighbouring heiress; and, as a prospective remedy for matrimonial *ennui*, was also speculating on the chance of employment on some foreign embassy.—Vincent himself had married one of his daughters to a neighbouring squire; whom he denominated an "unlicked cub," but an honest man. Thus I had the knowledge of all that the country could furnish, and thus "runs the world away."

War was proclaimed. The French advance into the territories of our old and very helpless ally, awoke England at once. The perfectly fruitless negotia-

tions, by which the slide from disgust into war is generally managed, had produced their effect ; and France, furious for its prey, and England, indignant at the French bulletins, for the first time were to be brought face to face. The Guards were ordered for embarkation. We received the order in the spirit of a jubilee. All had been prepared. And, on the day before our final parade, I received my appointment to a company.

That parade, next morning, was one which I believe was never forgotten, by any individual, who had the good fortune to witness it. Of all the striking ceremonials which I have ever seen, it was the most striking. The king had given notice of his intention to be present, and bid us farewell. At six o'clock, the three regiments were drawn up in front of the Horse Guards, a body of three thousand men, and finer-looking troops never bore arms. All the avenues to the park were crowded with the multitude. Exactly at the appointed half-hour, a rush of the people towards the parade showed that the king, always punctual, was at hand. He came, surrounded by general officers ; with the Prince of Wales, then a most chivalric figure, in the uniform of his regiment of light dragoons ; and the Duke of York, as a field-marshal. The enthusiasm of the troops could not be restrained, as this brilliant staff approached their line ; and three cheers were given with all the zeal of honest loyalty. There are times when tears are the only substitute for speech ; and the king, one of the most kind-hearted of men, was visibly affected at this reception. Another *cortège* now approached ;

they were the carriages of the queen and princesses. The scene now became almost painful. There was many a tear from royal and noble eyes—the impulse of high emotion, not of sorrow—or if tinged with the thoughts which always shade the name of war, yet undegraded by weakness. The multitude caught the feeling; the shouts subsided; and all was weeping, and waving of handkerchiefs.

The king put an end to this embarrassing sympathy. He rode forward, and taking his station in the centre of the parade, gave the word to “march.” He was answered by one gallant “huzza” from the line, repeated by the thousands and tens of thousands who now moved before and around us. Our bands struck up, and with the monarch and his sons at our head, and the queen and princesses following in their equipages, we marched through streets, crowded to the roof, echoing with acclamations, and wishing us all good fortune as we passed along; until we left the mighty metropolis behind. Even then, it was only to meet the new multitude of the country. The road to Greenwich, where we were to embark, exhibited a population as countless, enthusiastic, and full of good wishes, as those with whom we had just parted. The king still rode in our front; flags, banners, and every kind of animating testimonial met our eyes; and if ever there was a just triumph before the victory, it was in that honest and generous display of the true heart of England.

The embarkation took place within a few hours; and on that night, we slept on the element which

Britain has so long made her field of battle. The weather was serene, and we fully enjoyed the freshness of the air, and the brightness of the view, as we rounded the coast. At the mouth of the Thames, we met a strong squadron of the line of battle, appointed for our convoy, and bringing numerous transports with troops. Our fleet had now become extensive, and as we moved out from the land, the sight became continually more animated and exciting. The despatch of the look-out frigates, the constant passing of signals, the firing of guns to regulate the sailing of the great convoy, the manœuvres of those floating castles, the seventy-fours and three-deckers, the harmony of their bands as they passed us, sweeping along under a cloud of canvas, with the hum of the thousands on board—all formed one of the most heart-stirring combinations that could exist to the eye, or perhaps, to the heart of a human being.

I stood gazing from the poop of our transport the entire day: and even when evening came, it was but a change of interest and beauty. We sailed proudly along; a moving multitude—a fragment of a mighty nation—almost a nation ourselves, on the face of the deep. Within the horizon which now lay beneath my glance, smooth as glass, and shining in the richness of the departing day, what materials of living power were gathered; what bold hearts; what high hopes; what indefatigable perseverance; what accomplished intelligence! a force, inferior to the one before me, had more than once changed the fate of the world. It might be now on its way, only to change that fate

once more. The cause, too, was a noble one. It was stained by no aggression, no perfidy, or desire of conquest. It was simply to protect a friendly nation, and to sustain the faith of treaties. It had no taint of cruelty or crime to degrade the soldiership of England. We were acting in the character which had already exalted her name, as protector of the weak and punisher of the powerful; the great champion of justice, truth, and right, throughout the world.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“ Suppose that you have seen
The well-appointed king
Embark his royalty. And his brave fleet,
With silken streamers the young Phœbus fanning.
Play with your fancies, and in them behold
Upon the hempen tackle, ship-boys climbing ;
Hear the shrill whistle, which doth order give
To sounds confused ; behold the threaded sail
Borne with th’ invisible and creeping wind,
Draw the huge bottoms through the furrow’d sea,
Breasting the lofty surge.”

SHAKSPEARE.

ON the second evening, we had left the green hills and white cliffs behind, and saw the long level of the coast of Holland. But, if the coast was repellent, nothing could exceed the eagerness of the inhabitants to welcome our arrival. On our first approach to the land, every boat that could swim came off, crowded with people, some to take refuge on board the fleet, but thousands to urge our speedy landing. The ferocious plunder which had become the principle of the republican arms, had stricken terror into the hearts of the Hollanders ; a people remarkably attached to home, and fond, or even jealous, of the

preservation of the most trivial article of property connected with that home. The French troops, often pressed with hunger, and adopting the desperate maxim of "making war support war," had committed such wanton havoc of property in the Netherlands; that, at this distance, the common effect of exaggeration described them as rather demons than men.

The man-of-war boats were instantly cheering round us; and my regiment had the honour to be the first on shore. War is of all things the most picturesque, and there never was a gala on the waters of the Adriatic more gay or glittering than the landing. But we had infinitely the advantage in our numbers, in the gallantry, and, what gave a higher feeling to the whole, in the reality of all our objects. This was no painted pageant; it was real strength, real soldiership; the cannon that roared above our heads, as we descended into the boats, were the thunderers which had shaken many a battlement; the flotilla of launches, long-boats, and cutters, which covered the sea, was manned with the soldiers and sailors destined to fight the actual battle of human freedom on every shore of the globe. The ships were that British fleet, whose name was synonymous with the mightiest exploits of war, and which it would have been well worth going round the globe to see.

On this night we bivouacked; for the shore offered no human habitation, and it was too late for the landing of our tents. But the sand was dry; our fires were soon lighted; all was sport and activity; our bands played "Welcome to Holland;" our men danced with the peasantry; all had the look of a mag-

nificent frolic ; and, when at last I threw myself on my open-air pillow, I dreamed of the " March to Paris."

At daybreak we moved in advance, in the highest spirits, and only longing to have an opportunity of trying our strength with the enemy. From time to time, the sound of a cannonade reached us, and heightened our eagerness. But Holland is proverbially difficult for any movements but those of a track-schuyt ; and the endless succession of narrow roads, the perpetual canals, and the monotony of her level fields, rich as they were, exhausted us more than the distance. But the spell of human hearts is excitement, and war is all excitement. All round us was new, and, from the colonel to the rank and file, the " general camp, pioneers and all," enjoyed the quaint novelty of Dutch life. The little villages, so unlike our own, and yet so admirably fitted for peasant comfort ; the homesteads embedded in plantations of willows ; the neatness of every thing round the farm-houses, and even the sleekness of the cattle, which seemed by their tameness to form a part of the tenancy—all were objects of constant curiosity on our march ; and we could easily comprehend the horror with which the arrival of a French commissariat must strike these comfortable burghers. But the punctuality of British payments was perfectly known already ; the whole plenty of the land was poured out before us ; and we regaled sumptuously.

On the second evening of our march through this landscape of fatness, we were warned of our approach to the besieged fortress, by the louder roar of the cannon, and not less by the general desolation of the

country. The enemy's hussars had made a wide sweep, and wherever they were seen, the villagers had fled instantly, carrying off their cattle. We found the traces of those foraying excursions in the fragments of burned mills, a favourite object of destruction with the French—for what purpose I never could comprehend, except the pleasure of seeing them burn—in cottages unroofed, for the sake of the thatch; in broken moveables, and, in some instances, in the skeletons of horses and remnants of arms; for the peasantry were not always patient sufferers, and some of the smaller detachments of the plunderers had met with severe retaliation.

At length we halted for the evening, and orders were issued for a general movement at daybreak, to attack the French force covering the siege of Williamstadt. The order was received with shouts; and the night was spent in high exultation. The cannonade, which was now within a few miles of us, continued with such violence during the night, that sleep was next to impossible; and long before the first streak of light in the east, we were busy in the numberless preparations for a first action. Orderlies and aides-de-camp were speedily in motion, and at the first tap of the *reveillé* all were on parade. The sun rose brightly, gave one broad blaze along our columns, and after thus cheering us, instantly plunged into a mist, which, except that it was not actually black, obscured our road nearly as much as if it had been midnight. This was simply a specimen of the new land on which we now set foot. But it perplexed all the higher powers prodigiously; generals and the staff galloping

round us in all directions, the whole one mass of confusion. Yet we still pushed on, toiling our puzzled way; when, as if by magic, a regiment of the enemy's hussars suddenly dashed full into the flank of our column.

Never was there a more complete surprise. The enemy were as much astonished as ourselves; for the collision had been the result of an attempt to find their way through the fog back to their camp; but I now for the first time saw the temper of John Bull in the field. The attack of the hussars was evidently looked on by our men less as a military movement, than as a piece of foreign impudence. To fire, might be hazardous to some of our advancing columns, which we could hear, though not see; but the word "charge" from our gallant old colonel was enough; they rushed with the bayonet on the cavalry, forced their way in between the squadrons, which had been brought to a stand by the narrowness of the dyke; escape was impossible, and in a few minutes, the whole laid down their arms, gave up their horses to our fifiers and drummers, and were marched to the rear.

As if to reward us for this dashing affair, a gust of wind blew aside the fog; the sun gleamed again; and Williamstadt, the French camp, the covering force formed in columns and waiting for us, and the whole country to the horizon, green as a duck-pond, and nearly as smooth, burst on our view. The suddenness of the display was like the drawing-up of a stage curtain, with a melo-dramatic army and castle behind. Our advance was now rapid. The difficulty of the ground, intersected with high narrow cause-

ways stretching over marshy fields, retarded our progress ; and for two hours—and they were the two longest hours which any of us had ever spent—we were forced to content ourselves with firing at our long range, and watching the progress of our more distant columns moving on the flank of the enemy.

But, to a military eye, nothing could be more interesting, than the view of the vast field on which those concentric movements were developing themselves from hour to hour. At length, we received the order to advance, and drive in a strong column, which had just debouched from a wood in front of us. Our men rushed on with a cheer, threw in a heavy volley, and charged. Their weight was irresistible, and the French column broke, and took refuge again in the wood. Another glance showed me the whole British force in motion, every where pressing on ; the enemy every where retreating, and with all their columns converging upon their camp. Those are the brilliant moments of a soldier's life. All was exultation. We had met the enemy, and driven him from his position.

But the most difficult task of the day was still to be achieved. The camp of the French had been placed in strong ground ; heavy batteries commanded every approach ; and Dampierre, their general, an officer of known ability, had exhibited all his skill in rendering the position, if not impregnable, at least, one which could not be forced without the most serious loss. The day was already far spent, and the troops were wearied with six hours' marching and fighting ; but nothing could restrain their eagerness to finish the victory. The heads of columns again advanced,

and the firing became tremendous on both sides. The French batteries poured an absolute shower of balls upon us, and we were beginning to lose men, when a strange and indescribable sound suddenly caught every ear. Such was the universal sense of something more singular, and even more formidable, than the work of war, that the fire on both sides rapidly subsided, and every eye was turned to look for the cause. It soon exhibited itself. With a roar like thunder, we saw the sea bursting in upon the plain where the enemy lay entrenched.—The Dutch garrison had sallied out from Williamstadt, on the repulse of the French, and cut the dyke in several places.

The ocean now fought the battle; each chasm in the long mound which protected the fields from inundation, was the channel of a roaring cataract; the trenches were soon filled; as the waters advanced, the field-works were washed away; wave still rolled on wave; cannon, tents, baggage, every thing but the soldier himself, was seen gradually sinking, or floating away on the surface of the surge. Within the hour, the ground on which we had fought during the day was completely covered with the flood. The French camp was totally buried. The enemy had only time to make a hurried retreat, or rather flight, along the causeways which stood above the waters. As an army, they were utterly ruined; when they at last reached firm ground, they scattered through the country, and those battalions never appeared in the field again.

Our troops entered the relieved fortress, with drums beating and colours flying. We were re-

ceived as deliverers ; all that the place could offer was heaped upon us ; and if praise could have repaid our exploits, never was praise more abundant, than from the lips of the whole population.

The catastrophe was complete ; and when, at night, I broke away from the heat and noise of the huge barrack in which we had been placed, as the post of favour ; and walked upon the rampart, nothing could form a more expressive contrast to the tumult of the day. The moon was high, and her light showed the whole extent of the late field of battle. But all was now one immense, shining lake. Where cavalry had charged and artillery had roared, and the whole living clash and confusion of a stubborn engagement had filled the eye and ear, but a few hours before, all was now an expanse of quiet water, calm as the grave, without a vestige of the struggle, but with hundreds of the combatants sleeping their last sleep below, and the whole artillery and equipment of a powerful army submerged.

I was still gazing from the ramparts, when I observed a body of cavalry advancing along the dyke, at a rapid pace, with a group of staff officers among them. The alarm was given by the sentries ; and, after some brief pause, it was ascertained that they were the escort of the new commander-in-chief of the allied armies in the Netherlands. My first impression was, that the man to whom so important a trust was given, must be Clairfait ; and I hastened down to meet him at our quarters. But I was disappointed ; and for the dark and decided physiognomy, and military frankness of that distinguished soldier,

I saw the Prince Cobourg, stern and lofty in his air, evidently too Austrian to be popular, yet known to be a gallant officer. But my disappointment was considerably assuaged, by seeing one of his staff throw himself off his horse, and hasten towards me with almost joyous salutation. My surprise and pleasure were equal, when I found him to be Guiscard!

Supper was on the table when I introduced the Prussian philosopher to my brother officers; and they were delighted with him. But he was the philosopher no longer, or rather had thrown off the half-misanthropy which had made him so strong a contrast to my honest friend Vornhorst. His very countenance had adopted a different expression. It was no longer stern and sarcastic, but was lighted up with pleasantry; and the only conception of the change which I could form was, either that he had arrived at that height of philosophy to which every thing seems trivial, or that he had met with some of those extraordinary instances of good fortune which throw all the world into sunshine for the moment.

But he was full of knowledge on the subject most interesting to his hearers; and he gave us his information of the allied councils, and the movements of the armies, with a copiousness and courtesy which all our questioning could not tire.

"We have now," said he, "the finest army in line that Europe has ever seen; little less than 200,000 men are under the command of the prince. If he is suffered to move them in a mass, they must break through any part of the French territory which they choose. If they divide, they will be beaten. It will

now take only three pitched battles to reach Paris—for the three covering armies fight with the guillotine in their rear. But a single unlucky skirmish may bring every peasant in France upon us; and it takes but fifteen days to make the French peasant a soldier. Blows, and those straightforward, are our true policy. If we negotiate, we shall be beaten; if beaten here, we shall be beaten on the Rhine, and perhaps even on the Danube.”

The news of Dumourier’s attempt to overthrow his government had reached us, but in the usual way of mystification. The answer of Guiscard was prompt and plain. “Dumourier,” said he, “is one of those men who have a one-sided understanding. He is a capital soldier, but a childish statesman; while, with an absurdity by no means limited to himself, he thinks that his talent lies in statesmanship. The result has been, that the factions have always managed him, as they do all men of his calibre. But, when he attempted to act for himself, they crushed him without mercy; when he ceased to be a tool, he necessarily became a victim. The army is now in retreat. To the French, retreat is always ruin; the horseman sells his horse; the foot-soldier sells his musket; and the artilleryman sells his powder and ball, breaks up his gun-carriage for a fire, and throws his gun into the next ditch. The peasantry then fall on them all, repay their plunder with the pike and the pitchfork, and in three days the army is dissolved.”

“But will Cobourg follow up his blow?” was the question on all sides.

"The commander-in-chief," was the answer, "is intelligent and brave. He has learned his profession under the greatest soldier whom Russia has ever produced, or perhaps ever will produce—Suwarrow. —But he himself is under orders. If he were a republican general, he would instantly march, and within a week he would be in the Tuileries. But, as an Austrian commander, he must wait for the opinion of men—too far off to know a single fact of the campaign; too blind to see it, if they were on the spot; and too jealous even of their own general to suffer him to beat the enemy, if victory would throw their nothingness into the shade."

Every hour now produced its event. A general *feu-de-joie* announced the first success of the campaign on the Rhine; Mayence had been taken, with its garrison of 20,000 men. The French general, Custine, had made an unsuccessful attack on the lines of the besiegers, to relieve the fortress in its last extremity; had been beaten, and driven back into the Vosges, where he was at liberty to starve among the most barren mountains of France. But this intelligence came qualified by the formidable rumour, that Prussia was already making terms with the French, that it had acknowledged the government, as the "Republic," and even that the Prussians had sung the *Marsellaise*. Thus we had the light and shade.

But while politicians tremble, soldiers are gay. What were all those shiftings and doublings to us? We had all the luxuries of the most luxurious of all lives, the foreign camp. We had now marched beyond the region of fogs and bogs, and were moving

through the richest soil, and not the least beautiful landscape, of the Continent. Holland was left behind, Flanders was round us, France was before us. We had the finest army in Europe, untouched by disaster, confident in its strength, and with the enemy in full flight. If we despised the fugitives, we fully as much despised the politicians ; the man with the sword in his hand naturally scorns the man with the pen behind his ear. Thus we galloped, danced, and dreamed on. The spring, too, had come ; the harshness of a foreign winter had been changed, within a few days, to the delightful softness of early summer. The fields were covered with flowers, and the country was filled with preparations for the rural *fêtes* of the first of May.

I enjoyed the scene doubly, for I had been sent, along with a squadron of dragoons, to the advanced posts, and thus escaped the turmoil of the camp. My quarters were in one of the old Flemish country-houses, which had been the head-quarters of the French general, and thus been preserved from the usual ravage. The chateau was large, well furnished in the national fashion, and the half-dozen domestics who remained after the flight of their master, were charmed with the expenditure which always follows the presence of English troops. My companion, the captain of dragoons, was one of the gallant specimens of his country—the heir of a noble family, generous and gay, brave as his own sword, and knowing as little of the soldier's life, as became a young aristocrat with the prospect of thirty thousand a-year. He insisted on our giving a ball to the

Flemings ; and our invitations were sent out accordingly, for half a dozen leagues round. They included, of course, the camp ; and every loungee who could obtain leave for the night, came crowding in upon our ball.

Nothing could succeed better. All was festivity within doors. But not so all without, for the night suddenly changed from serenity to storm. England is not the only spot famed for fickleness of atmosphere. By midnight, every beech and elm round the chateau was tossing and bending down to the roots, and a heavy snowfall was already sheeting the fields. As the storm rose, it occurred to me to ascertain, what provision might have been made against it by our soldiers, who were lodged in the barns and extensive outhouses of the chateau. Leaving my dragoon friend to act as master of the ceremonies, I sallied forth.

The storm was now at its height ; and it was with some difficulty that I could make my way. In the midst of the excessive darkness, I felt some animal make a sudden spring on me, which nearly brought me to the ground. Wolves were not common in the country, but there had been some recent instances of their issuing from the forests, and my first idea was, that I had been thus attacked. But, I soon recognised in my companion the huge house-dog of the chateau, with whom I had already struck up a particular friendship. More sharp-sighted than myself, he had rushed across the wood after me, and exhibited all imaginable rejoicing at the rencontre. I reached the barns, found all my men wrapped in that quiet, which

cares nothing for the troubles of kings and cabinet councils, and was preparing to return ; when Cæsar, with every demonstration of having found something of importance, brought me a letter which he had just dug out of the snow. By the light of the lantern, I discovered it to be, the Report of a French officer, informing his general of our intended ball, and proposing a plan for carrying off the whole party together. I was thunderstruck. The letter was dated three days before, and though evidently dropped by some negligence, yet giving full time for the writer to make his report in person, and bring the force necessary for our capture. If it succeeded, an exploit of this order might have paralysed the whole campaign ; for nearly the entire staff of the army, besides a crowd of regimental officers of all grades, were within the walls of the chateau.

I hastened back, showed the Report to one or two of the General officers, in private, for the purpose of avoiding alarm to our fair partners ; and we then considered, what means were left to protect us from the approaching catastrophe. Our little council of war was perplexed, and its propositions, various as they were, came finally to the usual result—that we had got into a scrape, and that we must get out of it as well as we could. To send the ladies away was impossible, in a tempest which already flooded every road, and with all the trees crashing over their heads. To expect reinforcements from the camp, at such a distance, and in such weather, was hopeless ; with the recollection, too, that the whole affair might be over in the next quarter of an hour, and our

entire assembly be in march before the French hussars.

This was the first occasion of my responsibility as a soldier ; and I learned, from this time forth, to give commanders-in-chief some credit for their responsibilities. The agonies of that half-hour I have never forgotten. Military failure was nothing, compared with the universal shame and blighting which must fall on the officer, who suffered such a disgrace to be inflicted on him in the presence of the whole army. My resolution was desperately, but decidedly taken—if the post fell into the enemy's hands, on that night to throw away my sword and abandon my profession; unless some French bayonet or bullet relieved me from all the anxieties of this feverish world. To propose the command of the post to any of the superior officers present was, as I well knew, contrary to rule; and on me and the dragoon, consequently, devolved the whole duty.

The service of outposts was a branch of soldier-ship, at that period, wholly unpractised by the British troops ; but I had seen it already, on its most perfect scale, in the Prussian retreat. My first step now was, to warn my soldiers and the dragoons of the probability of attack ; and my second, to call for a favourite quadrille, in which I saw all our guests busily engaged, before I left the chateau. I now proceeded to repeat my Prussian lesson, in reconnoitring the avenues to the house. This, which ought to have been our first act on taking possession, had been neglected ; in the common belief, that the enemy were in full retreat. The gallant captain of dragoons pro-

posed to take a gallop at the head of a party along the *chaussée*, and ascertain whether there were any symptoms of movement along the road. He mounted, and was gone. Posting the remaining dragoons in the farm-yard, I went to the front to make such preparations as the time might allow, for the enemy.

Like the greater number of the Flemish chateaux, the house was approached by a long avenue lined with stately trees; but it wanted the customary canal, or the fosse, which, however detestable as an accompaniment to the grounds in peace, makes a tolerable protection in times of war, at least from marauding parties. All was broad and open, except where the garden walls, and hedges of the lawn, shut it in. As the avenue was the only approach accessible to cavalry, and as this was the force which would probably be used for a *coup-de-main*, if it were to be attempted at all; I set all hands at work to secure it. Wild as the night was, my men wielded the spade and mattock with good will; and we had completed a trench of some feet deep and wide, half across the road; when I caught the trampling of cavalry at a distance. My chagrin was irrepressible;—the enemy would be upon us, before we had got through our work, and we must be taken, or fly. My men worked vigorously; but the cavalry were upon us—and to my utter astonishment and infinite relief, our labours produced a roar of laughter. The party were our own dragoons; who had looked for the French advance in vain, and were now amusing themselves with our waste of toil. We forgave them their jest; they passed, and we prepared to follow to our quarters.

Still, the French officer's report haunted me ; the precision of its terms, and the feasibility of the enterprise itself, struck me with new force ; and, even after I had given the word to move, I halted the men, and climbing a little pleasure-turret by the side of the avenue, gave a parting glance round the horizon. But, nothing was to be seen. The night was as dark as a dungeon, and I prepared to descend ; when, at the moment, the distant sound of a trumpet broke on the air ! I listened, and thought that I recognised the French call, for cavalry to "saddle and mount." I sprang down ; every man piled his arms, took spade and mattock in hand once more, and in a few minutes the trench was completed across the road. Still, no further notice of approaching troops was to be heard ; and I heard a low, but rather provoking, laugh spread among my company. Yet, I determined to persevere ; and ordering some of the trees round us to be cut down, formed a rude species of *chevaux-de-frise* in front of our trench. It was scarcely finished, when the distant trampling of cavalry was heard in the lull of the gale. All were now convinced ; and, dispatching a notice to the dragoons to be ready, we stood to our arms. Giving the strictest orders that not a word should be spoken, nor a shot fired, I waited for the enemy. The trampling now increased every moment ; and it was evident that the body of cavalry must be large, though of its actual numbers we could form no conjecture. They suddenly stopped at the entrance of the avenue, and I was in fear that my *trou-de-rat* would be discovered ; but the national impatience soon spared me this vexation. The cavalry, hearing

nothing in the shape of resistance, and not relishing the pelting of the storm in the open country, rushed in without further search, and came pouring on, at the gallop. The avenue was long, and the whole corps was already within it; when the leading squadrons came at full speed upon my rude fortification. In they dashed, into the very heart of my *chevaux-de-frise*. Nothing could equal the confusion. Some sprang over the trees, but it was only to be flung into the trench; some even leaped the trench, but it was only to be met by our bayonets. The greater number, startled by the cries of their unlucky comrades in front, attempted to rein back; but found it impossible, from the weight of the squadrons still pushing on from behind. At this point, while they stood, a struggling mass, wholly unable to move either backward or forward; I gave the word, to fire, and poured in a volley with terrible execution. An ineffectual firing of pistols was the only return. Some of their officers now rushed to the front, with the usual gallantry of their character; called on their men to advance, and charged the trench; but this dash only filled it with falling men and horses. I gave them a second volley, which was followed by a howl of despair; the whole of their leading squadron was brought down—every shot had told. The mass still stood, evidently taken by surprise, and wholly unable to extricate themselves. I now ordered our dragoons to mount, take a circuit to the head of the avenue, and, if possible, close them in. While we continued our fire, I heard the effect of my order, in the shout of a charge at the further end of the avenue.

The staff and other officers in the chateau had already hurried out at the sound of the firing: some had come up to us, and others had joined the dragoons. A proposal was now sent by a general officer to the commandant of the enemy, to surrender, with a threat of being put to the sword, in case of an instant's delay. The brave Frenchman was indignant at the proposal, and threatened to hang the bearer of it on the next tree. But the British camp had by this time been alarmed. Bugles and trumpets were heard in every direction. Our dragoons had already shut up the avenue; and after some slight discussion, the advance of a few squadrons more, which came up at the gallop, proved the total impossibility of escape, and the affair was at an end.—This night's *mêlée* had no rival in the campaign; it put into our hands twelve hundred of the best cavalry in the French army, and almost wholly stripped the enemy of the means of protecting his flanks; while it made a most brilliant figure in the Gazette—the true triumph of the British soldier.

To me, it was a restoration to life from the depths of despair. It may be perfectly true, that many a post has been surprised, and many an officer captured, without being objects of penalty, or even of public observation; but my case was different. My character as a soldier was essential to my existence. The eyes of many, at home and abroad, were on me; and the scorn of one being, wherever she was, would have been fatal to me. But, of those bitter extremes I say no more; my spirit was buoyant with a sense that I had done my duty in the most effective style. Nor

was I left to my solitary sense on the subject. My return to the chateau was as triumphant, as if I had gained a pitched battle at the head of a hundred thousand men. Our fair guests, who had spent the hour before in the terrors of immediate capture, were boundless in their congratulations and expressions of gratitude. The officers, to whom my defence had made the whole difference between a French prison and liberty, spoke in the manliest and most cheering terms, of my conduct. The scene of the struggle was visited during the next day by every officer of the army, who could obtain a horse and an hour's leave; and the report which was forwarded to the commander-in-chief contained language, which was regarded as a sure pledge of promotion.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“ Let them come ;
They come like sacrifices in their trim.
And to the fire-eyed Maid of smoky war,
All hot and bleeding we will offer them.
The mailed Mars shall on his altar sit
Up to his ears in blood.”

SHAKSPEARE.

GUISCARD hurried over to join in the congratulation. He had been employed until a late hour in sending despatches to his court, relative to the growing problems of our politics with Prussia ; and taking the first opportunity of throwing aside the envoy, he came at speed to shake hands with me. His impatience to see the ground scarcely suffered him to sit down at table ; his toast “to the brave British army” was given, and we went out to traverse the avenue. After having inspected every corner of it with his keen military glance—“ You will find my theory right,” said he ; “ war is always a succession of mistakes. There never was a battle fought, in which even the successful general could not point out a series of his own blunders, any one of which

might have ruined him.—The only distinction is, that there are brilliant mistakes, and stupid ones. Yours was of the former order; the Frenchman's of the latter. If, instead of sending his whole brigade headlong down the road, like clowns at a fair, he had dismounted half a squadron of his dragoons, and sent them to fire into the casements of the chateau; while he kept the rest of his men in hand in the neighbourhood; he must have captured every soul of the party, and by this time had you all fast at the French head-quarters; but he blundered, and he has paid the price of blundering."

To my laughing reply, "that there was, at least, some merit in the steadiness of the men who beat him"—"Of course," was his answer. "The English steadiness is like the English fire, the grand cure for the English contempt of the tactician. Yours is an army of forlorn hopes; you are made for assaults: but it must be owned, that your troops of old managed that part of their business well, and I dare say, that the art is not lost among you yet. Still, there are other matters to be thought of. "Pray," said he, turning his keen eye on me, "can any one in the chateau tell me, how near us the French are to-night?" I acknowledged my ignorance. "I ask the question," said he, "because I think it by no means impossible, that they are at this moment marching down upon you.—Not that they can afford to lose a brigade of cavalry a-night, and I therefore think you safe enough for the twelve hours to come; but, I am far from answering for the next twenty-four. Dampierre commands them; I know

him well—he is a bold and also a clever fellow ; and the loss of his cavalry last night will leave him no alternative, but to attack you, or to meet the guillotine. These are fine times to make a general officer look about him.—My last letters from the Rhine state, that the two generals of the two covering armies on the frontier have been put under arrest, and that they are now both on their way to Paris, from which Custine and Beauharnais will probably never return with their heads on their shoulders.”

I shuddered at this fate of brave men, overcome only by circumstances : and asked, “ whether it was possible that such a system could last, or in any case could be endured by men with swords in their hands.”

“ It can, and will,” was the reply. “ Soldiers are the simplest race of mankind, when they come in contact with the cunning men of cities. An army, showy and even successful as it may be, is always an instrument and no more—a terrible instrument, I grant you, but as much in the hands of the civilian, as one of your howitzers is in the hands of the men who load and fire it. At this moment sixty commissioners, ruffians and cut-throats to a man—fellows whom the true soldier abhors, and who are covered with blood from top to toe ; are on their way from Paris to the head-quarters of the fourteen armies of the republic.—Woe be to the general who has a will of his own ! Those fellows will arrest him, in the midst of his own staff, carry him off in the presence of his army, and send him to give a popular holiday

to the Parisians, by his execution within half an hour after his arrival. So much for the power of an army."

"But Frenchmen are human beings after all. Must not those horrors revolt human nature?" was my question, put with indignant sincerity. He looked at me with a quiet smile.

"You are romantic, Marston, but you are of an age that becomes romance. When you shall have lived as long in the world as I have done, and seen as much of the world as I have seen, you will know that it is utterly selfish. It may be true, that some generous spirits are to be found here and there, some fond hearts to cling to, some noble natures which inspire an involuntary homage to their superiority; but you might as well expect to be lighted on your way by a succession of meteors. In the world, you will find that every man carries his lantern for himself; and that whether small or great his light, the first object is, to guide his own steps, with not the slightest care whether yours may not be into the swamp—unless, indeed, he may have a particular object in bewildering you into the very heart of it. But now, to more pressing affairs than my honest and luckless philosophy. Get leave from your colonel to take a ride with me. I feel a sudden wish to know what Dampierre is doing; and a few hours, and as few leagues, may supply us with information, on points which your brave countrymen seem so constitutionally to despise.—But recollect that *I* am a Prussian."

We returned to the table, which was crowded

with visitors, and spent an hour or two in great enjoyment; for what enjoyment can be higher than the conversation of minds willing to give and receive intellectual pleasure? And Guiscard was never more animated, easy, and abundant, in communicating that pleasure. He was a model of the most accomplished order of the continental gentleman. He had commenced life as a scholar; a disappointment in his affections drove him into the army. He discovered that he was made for the profession; and, combining the accomplished diplomatist with the almost chivalric soldier, he had rapidly risen to the highest rank of the royal staff. But he had the still rarer qualities of a sincere heart, and was a firm and willing friend.

The orderly now returned with the leave for which I had applied. The post was left in charge of the captain of dragoons; and Guiscard and I, without mentioning our purpose, rode out quietly, as if to enjoy the cool of the evening. It was well worth enjoying. The storm had gone down at daybreak, and been succeeded by a glowing sun; the fields flourished again, and if I had been disposed to forget the tremendous business which might be preparing for the morrow, I might have lingered long over the matchless luxuriance of the Flemish landscape. There certainly never was one which gave slighter evidence of the approach of two hostile armies.

From the first hill which we ascended, the view, for leagues round, exhibited nothing but the rich tranquillity of a country wholly agricultural; soft uplands, covered with cattle grazing; ploughed

fields, purpling in the twilight; clumps of trees sheltering villages, from which the smoke of the evening fires rose slowly on the almost breathless air, giving the full impression of the comfort of the meal within; and at intervals, some huge old chateau, with its buttressed and richly-wrought architecture—those carvings and colourings which so strikingly convey the idea of a past age of quaint luxury and lavish wealth—rose from the centre of its beech grove, glaring against the sunset, as if it had been suddenly covered with a sheet of gold. All was peace, and the few peasants whom we met, as the night fell, all told the same tale, that there had been no patrols in their neighbourhood of late, and that, with the exception of the attack on the “out-posts of the English,” they had not heard or seen anything of the French, for a month before.

The night had now fallen, and though calm, it was one of remarkable darkness. We passed village after village, but by this time all were asleep, and except the disturbance of the house-dogs as we rode by, not a sound was to be heard. I too felt every inclination to take my share of “nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep,” and proposed to my companion, to turn our horses into the first farm-yard, and “borrow an hour” or two’s rest from the farmer’s hospitality, and clean straw.

“I agree with you,” was the answer, “that Dampierre is clearly not on this road; but, that is no reason why he may not be on some other. On considering the matter, I think that we have been wrong in looking for him here; for his national adroitness

is much more likely to have tried a movement in any other direction. He may now be marching on either the right or the left of the spot where we are standing ; and if he is the officer that I believe him to be, he is trying that game at this moment."

"What then is to be done, but ride back to our quarters, unless we should prefer being cut off by his advance?" was my question.

"One thing is to be done," was the reply—"we must not let ourselves be laughed at; and if we return with nothing more for our night's work, than the story, that we slept in a Flemish barn, we shall be laughed at.—So far as I am concerned, I care nothing for the sneers of ignorance; but, my young friend, your late conduct has inevitably made you an object of envy already; and the only way to pluck the sting out of envy, is by giving the envious some new service to think of."

We now agreed to separate, and examine the country to the right and left, for an hour precisely; meeting at one of the villages in the road, if no advance of the enemy were discernible within that time. We parted, and I commenced as comfortless an expedition, as it would be easy to imagine. The Flemish cross-roads, never very passable, were now deep in mire; the rivulets, of which they are generally the conduits, had been swelled by the storm of the night before; and I floundered on, for nearly the appointed time, in all the perplexity of a stray traveller.

I was on the point of returning, when I observed a sudden light rising above some farm-houses, about

half a league off. The light rapidly increased, and I rode forward, in some degree guided by its illumination. But, after blazing fiercely for a while, it sank as suddenly as it rose; and I was again left bewildered among hedges and ditches. But, a loud hum of voices, followed by the sound of many footsteps, now convinced me, that a large body of men were near; though whether peasants roused by the fire, or battalions, I was still unable to discover. While I stood under cover of a clump of trees by the road-side, the question was settled, by the march of a patrol of cavalry, followed at brief intervals by squadrons and light troops intermixed. It was evident, that Dampierre meditated a surprise of the British forces, and that the whole of his skirmishers were already in motion. How long this movement had continued, or how near the enemy might already have approached to the British camp, was entirely beyond my conjecture; and, for the first few moments, the probability of the surprise, and the possibility of my being already so completely within the range of the French march as to preclude my bearing the intelligence in sufficient time, made the drops of anxiety and perturbation roll down my forehead.—But, every thing must be tried. I no longer attempted to wind my way back through the network of lanes; but, in the spirit of an English sportsman, took the country in a straight line towards the British quarters. My horse, a thorough bred English hunter, evidently preferred leaping the Flemish fences, to wading his way through the swamps; and I had the honour of bringing the first informa-

tion, and the happiness of finding that I had brought it just in the right time.

The camp was immediately under arms; every preparation was made, with a silence which gave me a high conception of the capabilities of the British soldier for every species of service; and, without a sound among ten thousand men, we waited for the approach of the enemy.

Dampierre's manœuvre had been a dashing one; conceived and managed with the skill of an able officer. His purpose had been, to throw his main body into the rear of our position; and while he drew off our attention by a false attack on our front, avail himself of the confusion of a night attack to crush us. Whether the fighting qualities of the Englishman would not have made him repent of his plan under any circumstances, is no longer the question; but the surprise was now wholly his own.—The first volley which we poured into his columns, as they crept up stealthily towards our line, was so heavy that it finished the battle. By the blaze of the musketry, we could see the French masses actually rolling back upon each other, staggering and shaken like landsmen at sea, or like walls in an earthquake. Our cavalry were now ordered to follow; but the enemy were too quick in making their escape; and the intersected nature of the country forbade any continued pursuit. A few shots from our howitzers, which ripped up the ground after them, were all that we could send as our parting present; and the engagement, which began in such silence and stern-

ness, finished in roars of laughter from all our battalions.

Day broke, and the order was issued, to follow the French general. The troops, animated by the prospect of coming to action at last, and utterly wearied with the idleness of the camp, received the intelligence with shouts; and the whole moved rapidly forward. Dampierre, before the march of the previous night, had provided for casualty, by forming an entrenched camp, in the famous position of Famars. It was strong by nature, and he had added to its strength by covering it with field-works, and a powerful artillery. It was late in the day, before we came within sight of it; and its strength, from the height of its glacis—the natural glacis made by a succession of sloping hills—was all displayed to full and formidable advantage.

The troops, fatigued with the length of the march under the burning sun of one of the hottest days that I ever felt; were now halted at the foot of the heights; and the plans of attack proposed were various enough to have perplexed the Aulic Council itself. Lines of circumvallation, bombardment, and waiting the effects of famine, were successively urged. But the British style prevailed at last over the scientific. The Guards were ordered to head the column which was to storm the lines in front; while columns on the right and left were put in motion at the same instant. We rushed forward under a general discharge of the French artillery and musketry, and in a quarter of an hour the position was in our hands. The difficulty of its approach, and the broken nature of the ground

in its rear, still enabled the French general to make his retreat, with the chief part of his forces. But, our prize was well worth the trouble; for we brought back two thousand prisoners, and the whole artillery in position.

The war had now begun in earnest; and our advance was unintermitted. On the eighth day from the storm of Famars, we again came in sight of Dampierre. He was now the assailant; our army, which had never exceeded ten thousand men, (such was the military parsimony of those days,) with the Prussian troops, and some of the smaller German contingents, were now unwisely spread, to cover a line of nearly thirty miles. The French general had seized the opportunity of retaliating his ill fortune upon the allied troops. At daybreak we were roused by the tidings, that the French had broken through our weak extended line in several places, and had got into the rear of the whole army. The force of the enemy, its direction, and its object, were alike matters of total ignorance; and, for some hours, it was impossible to obtain any exact information.

It was in vain, that we adopted all the usual expedients, of detaching officers, examining peasants, or judging of the progress of the engagement by the sound of the advancing or retreating fire. We had only to wait, drawn up ready for action, and take our chance of the result. Of all the contingencies of the field, none is more perplexing; but I had a personal source of anxiety, to add to the general vexation. I had every reason to believe, that my excellent friend, Guiscard, had either fallen into the hands of the

enemy, or had been killed on the night when we separated. If either misfortune had occurred, it was solely in consequence of his zeal for my character; and the thought inexpressibly distressed me. I had made the most persevering enquiries for him, but without any success; or rather, with a painful gathering of facts, all which told against my feelings.—His horse had been found straying through the country; his helmet had been also found; with a fragment of a sabre, in a spot evidently much trampled, and which, therefore, appeared to be the scene of the personal rencontre in which he had probably fallen. Every thing had been found, but his body.

At length, the firing, which had continued with more or less steadiness during the day, approached our position, and we were ordered to advance. The country was now a portion of an ancient forest, and it was difficult to see in front of us, beyond a few hundred yards. As we made way, we could hear not only the musketry, but the shouting of the troops engaged; as, growing constantly more impatient, we pressed on. At length, an officer came galloping towards us. Judge of my astonishment and delight, when I saw Guiscard. As he reined up beside me—

“I have not a moment,” said he, “to speak to you; you shall hear of my adventures by and by. I was in as much fear for you, as you probably were for me. But now, tell me, where I am to look for the officer in command of the column.”

The general was soon found; and Guiscard communicated to him that the enemy had concentrated his chief force directly in front of us, where a Prussian

column was posted; that the Prussians had vigorously resisted several successive attacks; but that the force converging on it was too powerful, and that it must speedily retire. "Then let it retire," was the general's reply, "and we shall take its place."

"Pardon me, general," was the prompt suggestion of the pupil of a more experienced school; "but, if you will permit me, I shall ride back to my countrymen, inform them of your advance, and make them hold their position; until you come out from the forest upon the enemy's flank."

His opinion was received, and he put spurs to his horse, and was gone. We now moved with all speed to the right of our former direction; and after half an hour's toiling through the intricacies of a wood, on which no axe seemed to have fallen since the Deluge, passed round the enemy, and came full upon their rear. A few volleys, thrown in upon them in this state of alarm, broke them. The Prussian fire in front, and ours in the rear, made their disorder irreparable. In this crisis, Dampierre rushed forward, with a group of aides-de-camp, to restore the engagement; striking the fugitives with his sabre, and desperately exposing his person to the balls, which now fell thick as hail around him. For a while, he seemed to bear a charmed life; but a rifleman of the Prussian hulans took a sure aim. He fired, and I saw the unfortunate general fall from his horse. He died instantly.—A more gallant death, though scarcely a more expeditious one, than awaited the unsuccessful generals of the merciless Republic. We buried him on the spot

where he fell, with the honours due to a distinguished soldier.—Before nightfall, the French had retired in all quarters ; and the remnant of their troops hurried across the Flemish frontier, utterly disheartened and ruined.

This engagement, which was known long after, as the battle of the forest of Vicogne, cleared the Netherlands, raised the fame of the British troops to the highest pitch, and left in their hands four thousand prisoners.

The councils of the allied camp now assumed a bolder tone. France was before us. The popular enthusiasm had been cooled by time and calamity. Defeat had taught the nation the folly of supposing, that it could contend single-handed with Europe ; and the only obstacle to our march to Paris was the line of fortresses erected by Louis XIV. The most powerful of those fortresses lay in the road by which the British columns were now advancing ; and it was with a singular mixture of rejoicing and anxiety, of ardour and awe ; that I saw, at the breaking of a brilliant morning, spread beneath me, the strong city of Valenciennes.

CHAPTER XXIX.

“ Oh, for the sulphurous eve of June,
When down this Belgian hill
His bristling guards’ superb platoon
He led unbroken still.

* * * * *

Now gladly forward he would dash
Amid that onset—on,
Where blazing shot, and sabre crash,
Pealed o’er his empire gone.
There ’neath his vanquished banners lost
Should close his grand career.”

SIMMONS.

EUROPE had never seen so complete or so powerful an army, as that which was now assembled within sight of Valenciennes. The city was already regarded as in our possession; and crowds of military strangers, from every part of the Continent, came day by day pouring into the allied camp. Nothing could equal the admiration excited by the British troops. The admirable strength, stature, and discipline of the men, and the successes which they had already obtained, made them the first object of universal interest; and the parades of our regiments

formed a daily levee of princes and nobles. It was impossible that soldiership could be on a more stately scale. Other times have followed, which have shown the still statelier sight of nations marching to battle; but the hundred thousand men who marched under Cobourg to take up their position in the lines of Valenciennes, filled the eye of Europe; and never was there a more brilliant spectacle.

At length, orders were issued, to prepare for action, and the staff of the army were busily employed in examining the ground. The Guards were ordered to cover the operations of the pioneers; and all was soon in readiness for the night on which the first trench was to be opened. A siege is always the most difficult labour of an army, and there is none which more perplexes a general. To the troops, it is incessant toil; to the general, continual anxiety. The men always have the sense of that disgust, which grows upon the soldier, when he contemplates a six weeks' delay in the sight of stone walls; and the commander, alive to every sound of hazard, feels that he yet must stand still, and wait for the attack of every force which can be gathered round the horizon. He may be the lion, but he is the lion in a chain—formidable, perhaps, to those who may venture within its length, but wholly helpless against all beyond. Yet those feelings, inevitable as they are, were but slightly felt in our encampment round the frowning ramparts of the city. We had already swept all before us; we had learned the language of victory; we were in the midst of a country abounding with all the good things of life, and which,

though far from exhibiting the luxuriant beauty of the British plains, was yet rich and various enough to please the eye.

Our camp was one vast scene of gaiety. War had, if ever, laid aside its darker draperies, and "grim-visaged" as it is, had smoothed its "wrinkled front." The presence of so many visitors of the highest rank gave every thing the air of royalty. High manners, splendid entertainments, and all the habits and indulgences of the life of courts, had fled from France, only to be revived in Flanders. Our army was a court on the march; and the commander of the British—the honest, kind-hearted, and brave Duke of York—bore his rank like a prince, and gathered involuntarily round him as showy a circle as ever figured in St. James's, or even in the glittering saloons of the Tuileries. Hunting parties, balls, suppers, and amateur theatrical performances, not merely varied the time, but made it fly. Hope had its share too, as well as possession.—Paris was before us; and on the road to the capital lay but the one fortress which was about to be destroyed with our fire; and of which our engineers talked with contempt as the decayed work of "old" Vauban.

But the course of victory is like the course of love, which, the poet says, "never does run smooth." The successes of the allies had been too rapid for their cabinets; and we had found ourselves on the frontiers of France before the guardian genii of Europe, in the shape of the stiff-skirted and antiquated privy councillors of Vienna and Berlin, had made up their minds, as to our disposal of the prize.

Startling words suddenly began to make their appearance in the despatches, and "indemnity for the past and security for the future"—those luckless phrases, which were yet destined to form so large a portion of senatorial eloquence, and give birth to so prolific an offspring of European ridicule—figured in diplomacy for the first time; while our pioneers stood, pickaxe in hand, waiting the order, to break ground.

We thus lost day after day. Couriers were busy, while soldiers were yawning themselves to death; and the only war carried on was in the discontents of the military councils.—Who was to have Valenciennes? whose flag was to be hoisted on Lille? whose army was to garrison Condé? became national questions. Who was to cut the favourite slices of France? employed all the gossips of the camp, in imitation of the graver gossips of the cabinet; and, in the mean time, we were saved the trouble of the division, by a furious decree from the Convention, ordering every man in France to take up arms; converting all the churches into arsenals, anathematizing the German princes, as so many brute beasts, and recommending to their German subjects the grand republican remedy of the guillotine for all the disorders of their governments past, present, and to come.

Circumstances seldom give an infantry officer more than a view of the movements in front of his regiment; but, my intimacy with Guiscard allowed me better opportunities. Among his variety of attainments, he was a first-rate engineer, and he was thus

constantly employed, where any thing connected with the higher departments of the staff required his science. He was now attached to the Prussian mission, which moved with the head-quarters of the British force; and our intercourse was continued. I thus joined the reconnoitring parties under his command, and received the most important lessons in my new art. But, one of my first questions to him, had been the mode of his escape on the night of our volunteer reconnoissance.

“Escape? Why, I committed the very blunder against which I had cautioned you, and fell into the hands of the first hussar patrol that I could possibly have met. But my story is of the briefest kind. I had not rode forward half an hour, when my horse stumbled over something in that most barbaric of highways, and lamed himself. I ought then to have returned; but curiosity urged me on, and leading my unfortunate charger by the bridle, I threaded my way through the most intricate mesh of hedge and ditch within my travelling experience.—The trampling of horses, and the murmur of men in march, at last caught my ear; and I began to be convinced, that the movement which I expected from Dampierre’s activity was taking place.”

I could not restrain my sense of alarm, at the imminent hazards into which his zeal for my character, alone had led him. But he would listen to no apologies.

“The rashness,” said he, “was altogether mine. My chief feeling at the moment, was surprise at my own *insouciance* in having thrust you into hazard.

I next attempted to make my way across the country in your direction. To accomplish this object, I turned my horse loose, taking it for granted that, lame as he was, he was too good a Prussian, to go any where but to his own camp. This accounts for his being found at morn. I had, however, scarcely thus taken the chance of losing a charger, which had cost me a hundred and fifty gold ducats; when I received a shot from behind a thicket, which disabled my left arm, and I was instantly surrounded by a dozen French hussars. I was foolish enough to be angry, and angry enough to fight. But as I was neither Samson, nor they Philistines, my sabre was soon beaten down, and I had only to surrender. I was next mounted on the croup of one of their horses, and after a gallop, reached the French advanced guard. It was already hurrying on, and I must confess that, from the silence of the march, and the rapid pace of their battalions, I began to dread the effects of a surprise on some of our camps.—My first apprehension, however, was for you. I thought, that you must have been entangled in the route of some of the advancing battalions; and I enquired of the colonel of the first to whom I was brought, whether he had taken any prisoners.

“‘Plenty,’ was the answer of the rough Republican—‘chiefly peasants and spies; but we have shot none of them yet. That would make too much noise; so we have sent them to the rear; where I shall send you. You will not be shot, till we return to-morrow morning, after having cut up those *chiens Anglais*.’”

“Is it possible, that any soldier could have avowed

so atrocious an act—a cruelty so utterly barbarian?” was my exclamation.

“Perfectly,” was the reply. “The Frenchman was merely acting by the letter of the Republican law. The last decree of the Republic condemns all prisoners that belong to Britain or her allies, to death. So I had only to wait my chance. But remember, Marston, that, in the first place, the Frenchman was not under circumstances to put his promise in practice; he having soon found the English *chien* more than a match for the French wolf; and, in the next, that twelve hours form a very important respite in the life of the campaigner.—I was sent to the rear with a couple of hussars to watch me, until the arrival of the general, who was coming up with the main body. On foot and disarmed, I had only to follow them to the next house; which was luckily one of the little Flemish inns. My hussars found a jar of brandy, and got drunk in a moment; one dropped on the floor; the other fell asleep on his horse. I had now a chance of escape. As I took my last view of my keeper outside, nodding on his horse’s neck; I glanced on a huge hay-stack in the stable-yard. The thought struck me, that, helpless as I was, I might contrive to give an alarm to some of the British vedettes or patroles; if your gallant countrymen should condescend to employ such things. I stole down into the yard, lantern in hand; thrust it into the stack, and had the satisfaction of seeing it burst into a blaze. I made my next step into the stable, to find a horse; but the French had been before me, and those clever fellows seldom leave any thing to be gleaned

after them. What became of my escort, I did not return to inquire ; but I heard a prodigious galloping through the village, and found the advantage of the flame, in guiding me through as perplexing a maze of thicket and morass as I ever attempted at midnight. The sound of the engagement which followed, directed me to the camp; and I remain, a living example to my friend, of the advantage of twelve hours between sentence and execution."

I had another wonder for him ; and nothing could exceed his gratification when he heard, that his act had enabled me to give the alarm. But for that blaze, I should certainly have not been aware of the movement ; the light alone had led me into the track of the enemy, and given me time to make the intelligence useful.

"The worst of all this," said he, with his grave smile, "is, that the officer in command of your camp on that night, will get a red riband and a regiment ; and that you will get only the advantage of recollecting, that in war, and perhaps in every situation of life, nothing is to be despaired of, and nothing is to be left untried.—A candle in a lantern, properly used, probably saved both our lives, the lives of some thousands of your brave troops, the fate of the campaign, and, with it, half the thrones of Europe, trembling on the chance of a first campaign.—I shall yet have some of my mystical countrymen writing an epic on my Flemish lantern."

During this little narrative, we had been riding over the bleak downs which render the environs of Valenciennes such a contrast to the general luxu-

riance of northern France; and were examining the approaches to the city, when Guiscard called to his attendant for his telescope. We were now in the great coal-field of France; but the miners had fled, and left the plain doubly desolate. "Can those," said he, "be the miners returning to their homes? for if not, I am afraid that we shall have speedy evidence of the hazards of inactivity." But the twilight was now deepening, and neither of us could discern any thing beyond an immense mass of men, in gray cloaks, hurrying towards the city.

I proposed that we should ride forward, and ascertain the facts. He checked my rein. "No! Amadis de Gaul, or Rolando, or by whatever name more heroic your chivalry prefers being called, we must volunteer no further. My valet shall return to the camp and bring us any intelligence which is to be found there, while we proceed on our survey of the ground for our batteries."

We had gone but a few hundred yards, and I was busily employed in sketching the profile of the citadel, when we heard the advance of a large party of British cavalry, with several of the staff, and the Duke of York, then a remarkably handsome young man, at their head. I had seen the duke frequently on our parades in England; but even the brief campaign had bronzed his cheek, and given him the military air which it requires a foreign campaign to give. He communicated the sufficiently interesting intelligence; that since the victory over Dampierre, the enemy had collected a strong force from their garrisons, and after throwing ten thousand men into

Valenciennes, had formed an intrenched camp ; which was hourly receiving reinforcements. "But we must put a stop to that," said the duke, with a smile ; "and, to save them trouble, and ourselves time, we shall attack them to-morrow." He then addressed himself to Guiscard, with the attention due to his name and rank, and conversed for a few minutes on the point of attack for the next day—examined my sketch—said some flattering words on its correctness, and galloped off.

"Well," said Guiscard, as he followed with his glance the flying troop, "war is a showy spectacle, and I can scarcely wonder, that it should be the game of princes ; but, a little more common sense in our camps would have saved us to-morrow's battle. The delays of diplomacy are like the delays of law—the estate perishes, before the process is at an end. But now to our work." We rode to the various points, from which a view of the newly arrived multitude could be obtained. Their fires began to blaze ; and we were thus enabled at once to ascertain their position, and in some degree, their numbers. There could not be less than thirty thousand men, the arrival of the last few hours. "For this *contre-temps*," said Guiscard, as he examined their bivouac with his telescope, "we have to thank only ourselves.—Valenciennes ought to have been stormed, within the first five minutes after we could have cut down those poplars for scaling ladders," and he pointed to the tapering tops of the large plantations lining the banks of the Scheldt ; "but, we have been quarrelling over our portfolios, while the French have been

gathering every platoon within a hundred miles ; and now we shall have a desperate struggle, to force those lines, and probably a long siege as a finale to the operation. There, take my glass, and judge for yourself."

I looked, and if the novelty and singularity could have made me forget the serious business of the scene, I might have been amply amused. The whole French force were employed in preparing for the bivouac ; and fortifying the ground, which they had evidently taken up with the object of covering the city. All was in motion. At the distance from which we surveyed it, the whole position seemed one huge ant-hill. Torches, thickets burning, and the fires of the bivouac, threw an uncertain and gloomy glare over portions of the view, which, leaving the rest in utter darkness, gave an ominous and ghostly look to the entire. I remarked this impression to Guiscard, and observed that it was strange to see a "scene of the most stirring life so sepulchral."

"Why not?" was his reply. "The business is probably much the same."

"Yet sepulchral," I observed, "is not exactly the word which I would have used.—There is too much motion, too much hurried and eager restlessness, too much of the wild and fierce activity, of beings who have not a moment to lose, and who are busied in preparations for defence."

"Have you ever been in the Sistine Chapel?" asked my companion.

"No ; Italy has been hitherto beyond my flight ; but the longing to see it, haunts me."

“Well then, when your good fortune leads you to Rome, let your first look be given to that noblest work of the pencil, and of Michael Angelo: glance at the bottom of his immortal picture, and you will see precisely the same wild activity, and the same strange animation.—The difference only is, that the actors here are men, there, fiends; here the scene is the field of future battle; there, the region of final torment.—I am not sure that the difference is much, after all.”

At daybreak, the British line was under arms. The colour of the national uniform is the most showy and soldier-like in Europe. But the complete equipment of our troops, and the strength of our battalions lately reinforced from home, were in themselves a promise of victory. Yet, there were feelings still higher, in that display, than the mere pomp of soldiership. On the success or failure of the columns, which now waited only the word, to move; might depend the weightiest interests of mankind. Our war was, what no other war had been, since the old invasions under the Edwards and Henrys—national; it was as romantic as the crusades. England was fighting for none of the objects which, during the last three hundred years, had sent armies into the field—not for territory, not for glory, not for European supremacy, not even for self-defence.—She was fighting for a Cause; but that was the cause of society, of human freedom, of European progress, of every faculty, feeling, and possession by which man is sustained in his rank above the beasts that perish. The very language of

the great dramatist came to my recollection, at the moment when I heard the first signal-gun for our being put in motion.

“ Now all the youth of England are on fire,
And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies.
Now thrive the armourers ; and honour’s thought
Reigns solely in the breast of every man.
They sell the pasture now to buy the horse,
Following the mirror of all Christian kings
With winged heels, as English Mercuries.”

Our troops, too, had all the ardour, which is added even to the boldest by the assurance of victory. They had never come into contact with the enemy but to defeat them ; and the conviction of their invincibility was so powerful, that it required the utmost efforts of their officers to prevent their rushing into profitless peril. The past and the present were triumphant ; while, to many a mind of the higher cast, the future was, perhaps, more glittering than either.

Twenty-seven thousand men were appointed for the attack of the French lines ; and on the first tap of the drum, a general cheer was given from all the columns. The cavalry galloped through the intervals to the front, and batteries of the light guns were now sent forward to take up positions on the few eminences which commanded the plain. But the day had scarcely broke, when one of those dense fogs, the customary evil of the country, fell suddenly upon the whole horizon, and rendered movement almost impossible. Nothing could exceed the vexation of

the army at this impediment; and if our soldiers had ever heard of Homer, there would have been many a repetition of his warrior's prayer, that "live or die, it might be in the light of day."

But, in the interval, important changes were made in the formation of the columns. The French lines had been found of unexpected strength, and the Guards were pushed forward, to head a Grand division placed into command of General Ferrari. The British were, of course, under the immediate orders of an officer of their own, and a more gallant one never led troops into fire. I now, for the first time, saw the general who was afterwards destined to sweep the French out of Egypt, and inflict the first real blow on the military supremacy of France under Napoleon.—Abercromby, at this period, was in the full vigour of life; his strongly formed, manly figure, his quiet but keen eye, and a countenance of remarkable steadiness and thought, gave the indications of a mind firm in all the contingencies of war.

Exactly at noon, the fog drew up, as suddenly as it had descended, and we had a full view of the enemy's army. The French had completed their levies, with the characteristic rapidity of their nation; and their force, admirably posted, looked more numerous and formidable than any which had hitherto faced us. It was the covering army, not merely of the fortress, but of the Republic. I gave another glance to our own gallant line. It looked like a living stream of flame. The French were drawn up in columns in front of their camp, to which, by the most extraordinary exertion, they

had brought up during the night a numerous artillery, and fortified its circle with powerful redoubts ; the guns of the fortress defended their flank and rear, and their position was evidently of the strongest kind. But, all view was lost, from the moment when the head of our brigade advanced. Every gun that could be brought to bear upon us opened at once, and all was enveloped in smoke. For a full hour, we could see nothing, but the effect of the grape-shot on our own ranks as we poured on, and hear nothing but the peal of the batteries.

But, at length, shouts began to arise in distant parts of the field, and we felt that the Division which had been appointed to assault the rear of the camp, was making progress. Walmoden, commanding a brigade under Ferrari, now galloped up, to ascertain, whether our men were “ ready to assault the intrenchments.” “ The British troops are *always* ready,” was Abercromby’s expressive, and somewhat indignant, answer. At the instant of our moving forward, an aide-de-camp rode up, to acquaint the general, that the column under the Duke of York had already stormed three redoubts. “ Gentlemen,” said Abercromby, turning to the colonels round him, “ we must try to save our friends further trouble ; forward ! ”—In a quarter of an hour we were within the enemy’s lines, every battery was stormed, or turned, and the French were in confusion. Some hurried towards the fortress, which now began to fire ; a large body fled into the open country, and fell into the hands of his royal highness ; and some,

seizing the boats on the river, dropped down with the stream. All was victory : yet this was to be my day of ill-fortune.

In pursuing the enemy towards the fortress, a battalion, which had attempted to cover the retreat, broke, at the moment when my company were on the point of charging them. This was too tempting a chance, to be resisted ; we pushed on, taking prisoners at every step, until we actually came within sight of the gate, by which the fugitives were making their escape into the town. But we were in a trap, and soon felt that we were discovered, by a heavy discharge of musketry from the rampart. We had now only to return on our steps, and I had just given the word ; when the firing was renewed from a bastion, round which we were hurrying in the twilight. I felt a sudden shock, like that of electricity, which struck me down ; I made a struggle to rise on my feet, but my strength wholly failed me, and I lost all recollection.

On my restoration to my senses, in a few hours after ; I found that I had been carried into the town, and placed in the military hospital. My first impulse was, to enquire whether any of my brave fellows had shared my misfortune ; but all round me were French, wounded in the engagement of the day. I shrink from all recurrence to these scenes. No language can express the depth of wretchedness, which once was to be found in every military hospital of Europe. It is a more grateful topic, to regard the change which science and humanity have since effected in those places of desolation and despair.

It is to the matchless honour of England, that she led the way in an achievement so worthy of her generous and benevolent name.

Of the transactions of the field I knew nothing beyond my own share of the day ; but I had seen the enemy in full flight, and that was sufficient. Within a day or two, the roaring of cannon, the increased bustle of the attendants, and the tidings that a black flag had been erected on the hospital, told me that the siege had begun. I shall pass over its horrors. Yet, what is all war but a succession of horrors ? The sights which I saw, the sounds which I heard, from hour to hour, were enough to sicken me of human nature. In the gloom and pain of my sleepless nights, I literally began to think it possible, that a fiendish nature might supplant the human condition, and that the work before my eyes was merely an anticipation of those terrors, which to name startles the imagination and wrings the heart. Surrounded with agonies, the involuntary remark always came to my mind with renewed power and pain, in the common occurrences of the hospital day.

But, besides the sufferings of the wounded, a new species of suffering, scarcely less painful, and still more humiliating, began to be prominent. The provisions of the people, insufficiently laid in at the approach of the besiegers, rapidly failed, and the hospital itself was soon surrounded by supplicants for food. The distress, at last, became so excessive, that it amounted to agony. Emaciated figures of both sexes stole or forced their way into the building,

to beg our rations, or snatch them from our feeble hands; and I often divided my scanty meal with individuals who had once been in opulent trade, or been ranked among the *semi-noblesse* of the surrounding country. Sometimes I missed faces, to which I had been accustomed among those unfortunate beings, and I heard a still more unhappy tale—shall I call it more unhappy? They had perished by the cannon-shot, which now poured into the city day and night, or had been buried in the ruins of some of the buildings, which were now constantly falling under the heaviest bombardment in the annals of war. Of those scenes I say no more. If the siege of a great fortress is the most trying of all hazards to the soldier without, what must it be to the wretches within? Valenciennes was once the centre of the lace manufactories of France. The war had destroyed them at a blow. The proprietors had fled, the thousands of young and old employed in those delicate and beautiful productions, had fled too, or remained only to perish of famine. A city of twenty thousand of the most ingenious artists was turning day by day into a vast cemetery.

As I tossed on my mattress night after night, and heard the roar of the successive batteries, shuddered at the fall of the shells, and was tortured by the cries of the crowd flying from the explosions all night long—I groaned the deepest protest of my spirit against the passion for glory. It is true, that nations must defend themselves; the soldier is a protector to the industry, the wealth, and the happiness of the coun-

try; I am no disciple of the theory, which, disclaiming the first instinct of nature, self-preservation, invites injury by weakness, and creates war by impunity; but the human race ought to outlaw the man who dares to dream of conquest, and deny all renown to him who builds his name in the blood of man.

CHAPTER XXX.

“ What’s he, that wishes for more men from England ?
If we are mark’d to die, we are enough
To do our country loss,—and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honour.
By Jove, I am not covetous for gold;
Nor care I, who doth feed upon my cost :
It yearns me not, if men my garments wear ;
Such outward things dwell not in my desires.
But, if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive.”

SHAKSPEARE.

ON my capture, one of my first wishes had been, to acquaint the regiment with the circumstances of my misfortune, and to relieve my friends of their anxiety for the fate of a brother officer. But, this object, which, in the older days of continental campaigning, would have been acceded to, with a bow and a compliment by Monseigneur le Comte, or Son Altesse Royale, the governor ; was sturdily refused by the colonel in charge of the hospital ; a firm Republican, and the son of a cobbler, who, swearing by the Goddess of Reason, threatened to hang over the gate the first man who dared to bring him another such proposal. I next sent my application

to the commandant, a brave old soldier, who had served in the royal armies, and retained the feelings of better times ; but it was probably intercepted ; for no answer came. This added deeply to my chagrin. My absence must give rise to conjecture ; my fall had, probably, been unseen even by my men ; and while I believed that my character was above the scandal of either pusillanimity or desertion, it still remained at the mercy of all.

But, chance came to my relief. It happened, that I had unconsciously won the particular regard of one of the Béguines who attended the hospital ; and my *tristesse*, which she termed ‘*effrayante*,’ one evening attracted her peculiar notice. Let not my vanity be called in question ; for my fair admirer was at least fifty years old, and was about the figure and form of one of her country churns, although her name was Juliet ! Pretty as the name was, the Béguine had not an atom of the poetic about her. Romance troubled her not. Yet, with a face like the full moon, and a pile of petticoats which would have made a dowdy of the “*Belvedere Diana*,” she was a capital creature. Juliet, fat as she was, had the natural frolic of a squirrel ; she was everywhere, and knew every thing, and did every thing for every body ; her tongue and her feet were constantly busy ; and I scarcely knew which was the better emblem of the perpetual motion. My paleness was peculiarly distressing to her ; “it hurt her feelings ;” it also hurt her honour ; for she had been famous for her nursing ; and, as she told me, with her plump hands upon her still plumper hips, and her head thrown back with an air of con-

scious merit, "she had saved more, than even the doctors had killed."

I had some reluctance to tell her the cause of my *tristesse*; for I knew her zeal, and I dreaded her plunging into some hazard with the authorities. But, who has ever been able to keep a secret, where it was the will of the sex to extort it? Juliet obtained mine, before she left the ward for the night; and desired me to give her a letter, which she pledged herself to transmit to my regiment. But, this I determined to refuse, and I kept my determination. I had no desire to see my "fat friend" suspended from the pillars of the portico; or to hear of her, at least, being given over to the mercies of the provost-marshal. We parted, half in anger on her side, and with stern resolution on mine.

During the next day, Juliet was not forthcoming, and her absence produced, what the French call, a "lively sensation"—which, in nine instances out of ten, means an intolerable sense of ennui—in the whole establishment. I shared the general uneasiness, and at length began to cast glances towards the gate, where, though I was not exactly prepared to see the corpulent virtues of my friend in suspension, I had some tremblings for the state, "*sain et sauf*," of my Béguine. At last, her face appeared at the opening of the great door, flushed with heat and good-nature, and, as it came moving through the crowd, which gathered round her with all kinds of enquiries, exhibiting no bad resemblance to the moon seen through a fog; but, whether distinct or dim, hers was full and florid to the last. Her good-humoured visage revived

me, as if I had met a friend, of as many years' standing as she numbered from her cradle. But, all my enquiries for the news of earth, outside the hospital, were answered only by an "order" to keep myself tranquil, prevent the discomposure of my pulse, and duly drink my ptisan. All this, however, was for the general ear. The feebleness which kept me confined to my bed during the day, had made my nights wakeful. On this night, whether from the anxiety of the day, or the heavier roar of the siege, for the bombardment was now at its height, I exhibited signs of returning fever, and the Béguine remained in attendance. But, when the crowd had gone to such rest as they could find, amid the thunder of batteries and the bursting of shells, Juliet approached my pillow, with a broad smile, which distended her good-natured mouth from ear to ear, and thrust under my head a small packet—the whole operation being followed by a finger pressed to her lips, and a significant glance to every corner of the huge melancholy hall, to see that all was secure. She then left me to my meditations!

The mysterious packet contained three letters; and, eager as I was for their perusal, I almost shuddered at their touch; for they must have been obtained with infinite personal peril, and if found upon the Béguine, they might have brought her under the severest vengeance of the garrison. They were from Guiscard, Mariamne, and Mordecai. Thus, to three individuals, all comparatively strangers, was my world reduced. But they were no common strangers; and I felt, while holding their letters in my hand, and almost pressing them to my heart, how much more

strongly friendship may bind us than the ties of cold and negligent relationship. I opened the soldier's letter first. It was like every thing that Guiscard ever did ; manly, yet kind. "Your disappearance in that unfortunate rencontre had created much sorrow and surprise ; but the sorrow was all for your loss to *the* 'corps of corps,' and the surprise was, that no tidings could be heard of you, whether fallen or surviving. The flag and trumpet sent in next morning to obtain tidings of such as had suffered in that mad rush to the gates of the town, came back without being permitted to pass beyond the outworks, bringing a brutal message from the officer on duty, 'that the next flag should be fired on,' and that the 'brave soldiers of the Republic allowed of no compromise with the slaves of tyranny !'

"The bravado might be laughed at, but it left me in the dark, relative to your fate ; and, if you are to be flattered by the feelings of men who cannot get at you but by cannon-shot, you may congratulate yourself on having had as many fine things said of you, as would make an epitaph for a duke ; and, I believe, with a sincerity at least equal to the best of them. I write all this laughingly now, but suspense makes heaviness of heart, and you cost me some uneasy hours. Of course, I send you none of *our* news ; as you will hear it all in good time, and communications on public matters might bring your messenger or yourself into difficulties.—You are alive, and in good hands ; that is the grand point. Your character is now in *my* hands, and I shall take care of it ; I shall see you a general officer yet, if

you have not the greater luck, to retire and live an honest farmer, sitting under your own fig-tree and your own vine, with an unromantic spouse, and some half-dozen red-cheeked children. Farewell, we shall *soon* see each other."

The last line evidently meant more than met the eye, and I was now just in the mind to indulge in the fantasies of my fair correspondent. They were like herself—a curious mixture of mirth and melancholy.

"Why I wish to write to you, or why I write at all—which, however, I do decorously at the side of my father—are questions which I have not taken the trouble of asking, until this moment. But I am in Switzerland, where no one has time for anything but worshipping mountain-tops, and falling down at the feet of cataracts. Whether it would add to Mr. Marston's satisfaction, I cannot presume to say, but I feel better, much better, than when I first came into this land of fresh breezes and beauty of all kinds—the population, of every rank, always excepted. If I were, like you, a philosopher, I should probably say that nature gets tired of her work, and after having struck off some part of it with all the spirit of an Italian painter, disdains the trouble of finishing; or, like a French 'fashionable,' coquettes with her own charms, and is determined to make the world adore her, in spite of her slippers and her shawl. Thus, nature, which gave the peacock a diadem on its head, and a throne in its tail, has given it a pair of frightful legs. And, on the same charming principle, she has given Switzerland the finest of all

possible landscapes, and filled them with the most startling of all possible physiognomies.

“ But, no more of theory. It has always made my head ache, and headaches are, I know, contagious ; so I spare you. Yet, have you a moment, among your thousand and one avocations, to remember my father—or me ? I beg that I may not impede the march of armies, or shock the balance of Europe, while I solicit you to give me a single line—no more ; a mere ‘ annonce ’ of anything that can tell me of your ‘ introuvable ’ friend Lafontaine.—This is *not* for myself. The intelligence is required for a sister of his, whom I have lately met in this country, a showy ‘ citizeness ’ of Zurich, *embonpoint* and matronly, married to one of the portly burghers of the city, and exemplary in all the arts of sheep-shearing, wool-spinning, and cheese-making ; a mother, surrounded, *à la Française*, with a host of Orlandos, Hyacintes, Aristomenes, and Apollos—pretty children, with the Frenchman developing in all its gaudiness ; the Switzer remaining behind, until it shall come forth in cloudy brows, and a face stamped with money-making.—Madame Spiegler is still not beyond a waltz, and in the very whirl of one last night, she turned to me and *implored* that I should ‘ move heaven and earth,’ as she termed it—with her blue eyes thrown up to the chandelier, and her remarkably pretty and well-*chaussé’d* feet still beating time to the dance ; to bring her disconsolate bosom tidings of her ‘ *frère, si bien aimé, si malheureux.* ’ I promised, and she flew off instantly into the very

core of a dance, consisting of at least a hundred couples.

“I have just returned from a drive along the shore of the Leman. The recollection of Madame Spiegler, rolling and rushing through the waltz, like a dolphin through the waves ; or like anything caught in an enormous whirlpool, and sweeping round perpetually, until it was swept out of sight, had fevered me.—The air here is certainly delicious. It gives a sense of life ; a vivid, yet soft, feeling, that makes the mere act of breathing it delightful. But I have mercy on you—not one word of Clarens, not one word of Meillerie. Take it for granted, that Voltaire’s Castle is burnt down, as it well might be without any loss to the picturesque ; and that Jean Jacques never wrote, played the knave, or existed. If I were a Swiss Caliph Omar, I should make a general seizure, to be followed by a general conflagration, of every volume that has ever touched on the wit and wickedness of the one, or the intolerable sensibility of the other. I should next extend the flame to all Tours, Meditations, and Musings on hills, valleys, and lakes ; prohibit all sunset ‘sublimities,’ as an offence against the state ; and lay all raptures at the ‘distant view of Mont Blanc,’ or the ‘ascent of the Rhighi,’ if not under penalty of prison, at least under a bond, never to be seen in the territory again. But I must make my *adieux*. *Apropos*, if you should accidentally hear anything of your *pélerin-à-pied* friend, Lafontaine—for I conjecture that he has gone to discover the fountains of the Nile, or is at this

moment a candidate for the office of court-chamberlain at Timbuctoo—let me hear it. Madame Spiegler is really uneasy on the subject, though it has not diminished either her weight or her velocity, nor will prevent her waltzing till the end of the world, or of herself. *One* sentence—nay, one syllable—will be enough.

“This twilight *is* charming, and it is only common gratitude to Nature, to acknowledge, that she has done something in the scene before my casement at this sweet and quiet hour, which places her immeasurably above the *décorateurs* of a French *salon*. The sun has gone, and the moon has not yet come. There is scarcely a star; and yet a light lingers, and floats, and descends over everything—hill, forest, and water—like the light that one sometimes sees in dreams. All is dream-like, the work of a spell laid over a horizon of a hundred miles. I should scarcely be surprised to see visionary forms rising from these woods and waters, and ascending in bright procession to the clouds. I hear, at this moment, some touches of music, which I could almost believe to come from invisible instruments, as they pass along with the breeze. Still, may I beg of you, Mr. Marston, not to suppose, that I mean to extend this letter to the size of a government despatch, nor that the mark which I find I have left on my paper, is a tear?—*I* have no sorrow to make its excuse. But here, one weeps for pleasure, and I can forgive even Rousseau his—‘*Je m’attendrissais, je soupirais, et je pleurais comme un enfant. Combien de fois, m’arrêtant pour pleurer plus à mon aise, assis sur une*

grosse pierre, je me suis amusé à voir tomber mes larmes dans l'eau.' Rousseau was lunatic, but he was *not* lunatic when he wrote this, or *I* am growing so too. For fear of that possible romance, I say, farewell.

“P.S.—Remember Madame Spiegler. *Toujours à vous*—MARIAMNE.”

My third letter was Mordecai to the life—a bold, hurried, yet clear view of the political bearings of the time. It more than ever struck me, in the course of his daring paragraphs, what a capital leader he would have made for a Jewish revolution; if one could imagine the men of a thousand years of slavery grasping the sword and unfurling the banner. Yet, bold minds *may* start up among a fallen people; and when the great change, which will assuredly come, is approaching, it is not improbable that it will be begun by some new and daring spirit throwing off the robes of humiliation, and teaching Israel to strike for freedom by some gallant example—a new Moses smiting the Egyptian, and marching from the house of bondage, if even into the desert; but, only after seeing the host of its old oppressors left weltering in the surge of blood behind.

After some personal details, and expressions of joy at the recovering health of his idolized but wayward daughter, he plunged into politics. “I have just returned,” said he, “from a visit to some of our German kindred. You may rely upon it, that a great game is on foot. *Your* invasion is a jest. Your troops will fight, I allow, but your cabinets will betray. I have seen enough to satisfy me, that

if you do not take Paris within the next three months, you will not take it within ten times the number of years. Of course, I make no attempt at prediction. I leave infallibility to the grave fools of conclaves and councils; but the French mob will beat them all. What army can stand before a contagion?

“When I was last in Sicily, I scrambled to the summit of Etna during the time of an eruption. On my way back, I slept at one of the convents on the slope of the mountain. I was roused from sleep by a midnight clamour in the court of the convent—the monks were fluttering in all corners, like frightened chickens. I came down from my chamber, and was told the cause of the alarm, in the sudden turn of a stream of the eruption towards the convent. I laughed at the idea of hazard from such a source, when the building was one mass of stone, and, of course, as I conceived, incombustible. ‘*Santissima Madre!*’ exclaimed the frightened superior, who stood wringing his hands and calling on all the saints in his breviary; ‘you do not know of what stone it is built. All is lava; and at the first touch of the red hot rocks now rolling down upon us, every stone in the walls will melt, like wax in the furnace.’ The old monk was right. We lost no time in making our escape to a neighbouring pinnacle, and from it saw the stream of molten stone roll round the walls, inflame them, scorch, swell, and finally melt them down. Before daylight, the site of the convent was a gulf of flame.

“This comes of sympathy in stones—what will it be in men? Wait a twelvemonth; and you will see

the flash and flame of French republicanism melting down every barrier of the Continent. The mob has the mob on its side for ever. The offer of liberty to men who have spent a thousand years under despotism, is irresistible. Light may blind, but who loves utter darkness? The soldier may melt down like the rest; he is a man, and may be a madman like the rest; he, too, is lava, one of the multitude.

“Their language may be folly or wisdom, it may be stolen from the ramblings of romance writers, or be the simple utterance of irrepressible instincts within; but it is the language which I hear every where round me.—Men eat and drink to it, work and play to it, awake and sleep to it. It is in the rocks and the streams, in the cradle, and almost on the death-bed. It rings in the very atmosphere; and what must be the consequence? If the French ever cross the Rhine, they will sweep every thing before them, as easily as a cloud sweeps across the sky; and with as little power in man to prevent them. A cluster of church steeples or palace turrets could do no more, to stop the whirl of a hurricane.

“You will call me a panegyrist of Republicanism, or of France. I have no love for either. But I may admire the spring of the tiger, or even give him credit for the strength of his tusks, and the grasp of his talons, without desiring to see him take the place of my spaniel on the hearth-rug, or choosing him as the companion of my travels.—*I* dread the power of the multitude, *I* despair of its discipline, and *I* shrink from the fury of its passions. A republic in France can be nothing but a funeral pile, in which the whole

fabric is made, not for use, but for destruction; which man cannot inhabit, but which the first torch will set in a blaze from the base to the summit; and upon which, after all, corpses alone crown the whole hasty and tottering erection. But this I *shall* say, that Germany is at this moment on the verge of insurrection; and that the first French flag which waves on the right bank of the Rhine will be the signal of the rising.—I say more; that if the effect is to be permanent, pure, or beneficial, it will *not* be the result of the tricolor.

“The French conquests have always been brilliant, but it was the brilliancy of a soap-bubble. A puff of the weakest lips that ever breathed from a throne, has always been enough to make the nation conquerors; but the hues of glory no sooner began to colour the thin fabric, than it burst before the eye, and the nation had only to try another bubble. It is my full impression, that the favouritism of Revolution at this moment, will even receive its death-blow from France itself. All is well, while nothing is seen of it but the blaze ascending, hour by hour, from the fragments of her throne; or nothing heard but the theatrical songs of the pageants which perform the new idolatry of ‘Reason.’—But, when the Frenchman shall come among nations, with the bayonet in his right hand and with the proclamation in his left; when he shall turn his charger loose into the corn-field, and rob the peasant whom he harangues on the rights of the people—the republican baptism will give no new power to the conversion. The German phlegm will kick, while the French *vivacité* scoffs, and scourges; and

then alone will the true war begin.—Yet all this may be but the prelude. When the war of weapons has been buried in its own ashes, another war may begin, the war of minds; the struggle of mighty nations, the battle of an ambition of which our purblind age has not even a glimpse—a terrible strife, yet worthy of the immortal principle in man, and to be rewarded by a victory, which shall throw all the exploits of soldiership into the shade.”

END OF VOL. II.

PR

4518

C55

M37

1847

V. 2



3 1205 02042 8445

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A A

001 396 993

6

